

A.J. Boyle and W.J. Dominik

FLAVIAN ROME

Culture, Image, Text



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EDITED BY

A.J. BOYLE AND W.J. DOMINIK



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PREFACE

One of the marks of a vital academic discipline is its capacity to re-evaluate its own internal narratives. For much of the twentieth century the political, social and architectural history of ancient Rome during the Flavian principate (69–96 CE) attracted scholars and scholarship of the first rank, while the literature of the period was the victim of a story designed to discourage its study. Castigated as unoriginal, arid, trivial and bookish, the poetry of the period especially was marginalised as second-rate and, more often than not, left unexamined. The last two decades or so, however, have seen something of a revolution in the evaluation of both the poetry and prose writings of the Flavian period, and in the appreciation of the political and cultural context of which those writings were a constitutive and exegetic part. It seemed the right time to commission a set of studies of the larger political and cultural context of Flavian Rome, its literary and artistic productions, and the dynamic interplay between them. Our first aims were fairly limited: to bring together perhaps a dozen chapters which would explore the cultural dynamics of the period by juxtaposing literary with art-historical and political or cultural research. As our commissioning and passion grew, we discovered so much exciting work taking place that we doubled the number of chapters (and could have tripled it) and embraced several that dissolve the very ‘literary’, ‘political’ and ‘cultural’ distinctions which have themselves done much to restrict our knowledge. We decided to commission not only established international figures, who form the majority of the contributors, but also young, emerging scholars at the cutting edge of the discipline. It needs to be emphasised that all the chapters in this volume are new studies. They range from political, military and social analysis, through intellectual and art history, numismatics and literary criticism, to discourse inquiry and cultural critique. The result is a critical survey of the period, which underscores and re-evaluates its foundational importance. All Greek and Latin have been translated to make the volume accessible to as wide a readership as possible. We hope that the collection will be valuable both to the undergraduate student of the period and to the specialist scholar.

The usual acknowledgement of debts is an unusual pleasure. To all our contributors a sincere thanks for their patience and their thoroughness in obtaining the required permissions. And to Joseph Smith and Olivia Banks we are especially indebted for their hard labour and judicious intelligence in reading what must have seemed like an acre of proofs and for jointly compiling the indices; special thanks are also due to Wendy Wira for checking the proofs. The editors express their appreciation to Brill, particularly Julian Deahl, Senior Editor, for agreeing to publish the book in the first instance; to Michiel Klein Swormink, for permitting us to make necessary changes to the original proposal; and to Ms Gera van Bedaf, Desk Editor, for taking the book through the editing and production process. The University of Natal, the National Research Foundation of South Africa, Clare Hall Cambridge, the University of Otago, and the University of Southern California provided grants, fellowships and sabbatical leaves that enabled the editors to complete much of the work for this volume.

Los Angeles, USA
Dunedin, New Zealand
August 2002

A. J. Boyle
W. J. Dominik

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TEXTS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Ancient Works and Authors

The titles of ancient works are generally cited in Latin, occasionally in English or Greek (with an English translation).

Abbreviations of ancient authors and works are mainly those listed in the following works:

- Hornblower, S. and Spawforth, A. (eds) (1996) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 3rd edn. Oxford.
- Hammond, N. G. L. and Scullard, H. H. (eds) (1970) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 2nd edn. Oxford.
- Souter, A., Wyllie, J. M., Glare, P. G. W. *et al.* (eds) (1968–82) *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford.
- Liddell, H. G., Scott, R. and Jones, H. S. (eds) (1940) *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th edn. Oxford.

Modern Works

References to modern works in the chapters of this volume appear by scholarly surname, year and page references. References to scholars by name and page references only are to their chapters in this volume.

The abbreviations of the following modern works should be noted:

- BMC** Mattingly, H. (ed.) (1923) *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum 1: Augustus to Vitellius*. London.
- (ed.) (1930) *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum 2: Vespasian to Domitian*. London.
- (ed.) (1936) *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum 3: Nerva to Hadrian*. London.
- CAH** Walbank, F. W., Astin, A. E., Frederiksen, M. W. and Ogilvie, R. M. (eds) (1989) *The Cambridge Ancient History 7.2: The Rise of Rome to 220 B.C.* 2nd edn. Cambridge.
- Cook, S. A., Adcock, F. E. and Charlesworth, M. P. (eds) (1954) *The Cambridge Ancient History 8: Rome and the Mediterranean 218–133 B.C.* Cambridge.
- Astin, A. E., Walbank, F. W., Frederiksen and M. W., Ogilvie, R. M. (eds) (1989) *The Cambridge Ancient History 8: Rome and the Mediterranean to 133 B.C.* 2nd edn. Cambridge.
- Bowman, A. K., Garnsey, P. and Rathbone, D. (eds) (2000) *The Cambridge Ancient History 11: The High Empire A.D. 70–192*. 2nd edn. Cambridge.
- CHCL** Easterling, P. E. and Knox, B. M. W. (eds) (1985) *Cambridge History of Classical Literature 1: Greek Literature*. Cambridge.
- Kenney, E. J. and Clausen, W. V. (eds) (1982) *Cambridge History of Classical Literature 2: Latin Literature*. Cambridge.
- CIL** *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. (ed.) (1863–) Berlin.

- Dar.-Sag.* Daremberg, C. and Saglio, E. (eds) (1877–1919) *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines d'après les textes et les monuments*. Paris.
- EAA* *Enciclopedia dell'arte antica: Classica e orientale* 1–7. (ed.) (1958–66) Rome.
- FGrH* Jacoby, F. (ed.) (1923–) *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Leiden.
- FD* Boarguet, É. (ed.) (1929) *Fouilles de Delphes 3.1: Inscriptions de l'entrée du Sanctuaire au trésor des Athéniens*. Paris.
- FIR* Riccobon, S. (ed.) (1941) *Fontes Iuris Romani Antejustiniani* 1: *Leges*. 2nd edn. Florence.
- HRR* Peter, H. (ed.) (1914) *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae* 1. 2nd edn. Leipzig.
— (ed.) (1906) *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae* 2. Leipzig.
- IG* Kirchner, J. (ed.) (1931) *Inscriptiones Graecae* 2: *Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis Anno Postiores*. Berlin.
Dittenberger, W. (ed.) (1903) *Inscriptiones Graecae* 7: *Inscriptiones Megaridis et Boeotiae*. Berlin.
- IGUR* Moretti, L. (ed.) (1979) *Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae* 3. Rome.
- ILLRP* Degraasi, A. (ed.) (1965) *Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Rei Publicae* 1. 2nd edn. Rome.
— (ed.) (1963) *Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Rei Publicae* 2. Rome.
- ILS* Dessau, H. (ed.) (1892–1916) *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*. Berlin.
- KP* Ziegler, K., Sontheimer, W. and Gärtner, H. (eds) (1964–75) *Der kleine Pauly*. Munich.
- LIMC* *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*. (ed.) (1981–) Zurich.
- LSJ* Liddell, H. G., Scott, R. and Jones, H. S. (eds) (1940) *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th edn. Oxford.
- LTUR* Steinby, E. M. (ed.) (1993) *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 1. Rome.
— (ed.) (1995) *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 2. Rome.
— (ed.) (1996) *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 3. Rome.
— (ed.) (1999) *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 4. Rome.
- OCD*² Hammond, N. G. L. and Scullard, H. H. (eds) (1970) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 2nd edn. Oxford.
- OCD*³ Hornblower, S. and Spawforth, A. (eds) (1996) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 3rd edn. Oxford.
- OLD* Souter, A., Wyllie, J. M., Glare, P. G. W. et al. (eds) (1968–82) *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford.
- PIR*¹ Klebs, E. and Dessau, H. (eds) (1897–8) *Prosopographia Imperii Romani*. 1st edn. Berlin.
- PIR*² Groag, E. and Stein, A. et al. (eds) (1933–) *Prosopographia Imperii Romani*. 2nd edn. Berlin.
- RE* Pauly, A. and Wissowa, G. and Kroll, W. (eds) (1893–1980) *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Stuttgart/Munich.
- RAC* Klauser, T. (ed.) (1941–) *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*. Stuttgart.
- RIB* Collingwood, R. G. and Wright, R. P. (1965) *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain* 1: *Inscriptions on Stone*. Oxford.
- RIC* Sutherland, C. H. V. and Carson, R. A. G. (eds) (1984) *The Roman Imperial Coinage* 1: *From 31 BC to AD 69*. 2nd edn. London.
Mattingly, H. and Sydenham, E. A. (eds) (1926) *Roman Imperial Coinage* 2: *Vespasian to Hadrian*. London.
- RRC* Crawford, M. (ed.) (1974) *Roman Republican Coinage* 1–2. Cambridge.
- SIG* Dittenberger, W. (ed.) (1915–24) *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*. 3rd edn. Leipzig.
- TLL* *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*. (ed.) (1900–) Leipzig.

A Note on the Greek and Latin Text

The Greek and Latin texts used in each chapter are indicated in the notes or are the standard texts. When italicized as part of the Latin text, consonantal ‘v’ and ‘j’ have been printed as ‘u’ and ‘i’ throughout, while ‘U’ and ‘J’ appears as ‘V’ and ‘I’.

1. INTRODUCTION: READING FLAVIAN ROME

A. J. Boyle

Prelude

We cannot get by without periodization: it is a fundamental part of the job of doing history. But if we are to avoid a fetishization of the period into something which really does resist, deflect, and disturb clear thought, our periodization must be a reflexive exercise. And the only way to make it such is through historical analysis of the processes of writing history.

(Ian Morris)¹

It seems that we have come a long way since 1877 when the Oxford classicist Charles Cruttwell defended on ‘natural’ grounds his use of the term ‘Golden Age’ to apply to Latin literature from 80 BCE to 14 CE.² Or perhaps we have not. As recently as 1978 one prominent historian of Latin literature, trained by the same university, published a whole book parading similarly prejudicial periodisation.³ Of course, anyone who claims to be free of prejudice is almost always subject to it. Precise lines are drawn in this volume through the continuous movement of Roman political and cultural history: they are at 69 CE and 96 CE—the period of the Flavian principate. They have been drawn in substantial awareness of the potentially misleading character of such temporal demarcations, of their status as the product of extrinsic belief-systems, of their implied political and aesthetic agenda—in awareness, too, of a proponent’s need to reflect upon and justify, rather than ‘naturalise’, historical markers. No contributor to this volume believes that at 69 CE everything in the imperial city and its dominions changed, nor that at 96 CE everything changed again. Roman culture was a more lethargic beast than that. Nor is the assumption that the most important things that mattered

¹ Morris (1997) 131.

² See Hallett (1993) 47.

³ Williams (1978).

during this period were those pertaining to the Flavian court. The force of 'Flavian' is both less strong and more nuanced; but it is not an empty signifier. This short period witnessed an unusual and unusually well documented degree of social change and cultural activity (in architecture, sculpture, literature, in the formation of a new social elite) within an extremely patronal and pyramidal society at the apex of which were the Flavian court and its emperor—and a most unusual emperor at that, one not from the great families of the old Roman aristocracy, but from the Italian 'middle-class'.

It was an unusual period and recognised as *a period* by contemporary Romans themselves. Tacitus, part of its lived reality, which he described as 'savage even in peace' (*ipsa etiam pace saeuum*, *Hist.* 1.2.1), made it the subject of his first monumental historical work. Suetonius similarly saw 68 CE as the end of an era—the end of the *progenies Caesarum* (*Galb.* 1.1); he devoted the penultimate book of his *Vitae* to the imperial confusion of 68–69 CE and the final book to the *gens Flauia*, which 'finally upheld and stabilised the drifting empire' (*uagum imperium suscepit firmauitque tandem gens Flauia*, *Vesp.* 1.1). Martial also saw the period as a whole, and one defined by the Flavian *gens*:

Flauia gens, quantum tibi tertius abstulit heres!
paene fuit tanti, non habuisset duos.

(Martial, *De Spectaculis* 37[33])

Flavian line, how the third heir diminished you.
Almost worth doing without the other two.⁴

Like pre-Flavian Rome, post-Flavian Rome was perceived as temporally different. Pliny speaks of the *diuersitas temporum* experienced after Domitian (*Pan.* 2.3), Tacitus of the *beatissimum saeculum* ('most blessed age', *Agr.* 3.1) which followed 'times' (*tempora*) 'harsh and hostile to virtue' (*saeva et infesta uirtutibus*, *Agr.* 1.4). By contrast, the ensuing principates of Nerva and Trajan were 'times' (*tempora*) of 'rare felicity' (*rara . . . felicitate*) for human thought and speech (*Hist.* 1.1).

Of course much of Tacitus' and Pliny's temporal distinctions applied primarily to the *quindecim anni* of Domitian's reign (*Agr.* 3.2). But what Tacitus also saw were the continuities between Flavian Rome and the earlier (and later) principates: hence his *Annales* and the 'promise' of a work on the 'times' of Nerva and Trajan. Martial, too, saw

⁴ The English translations in this chapter are my own.

this, if we accept the reading of *Epigrams* 10 in this volume. Their perspicacity deserves attention. Observing similarities, while noting differences, and being equally sensible of both, is a profoundly difficult intellectual task. Ludwig Wittgenstein regarded the failure to perform this task as foundational to some of the most long-standing problems of European philosophy, which he designed his theory of ‘Family Resemblances’ to resolve.⁵ What his theory showed, is that many things derive their identity as members of a class, not from the possession of some complete set of defining features, but from their partial instantiation of a less determinate collection of characteristics, some of which will be apparent in one member of the class, while others will be apparent in another. Hence, when one asks, ‘What is “Flavian” about “Flavian art”?’⁶ the most inappropriate answer would be to list a definitive set of features which all examples of Flavian art possess. There is, to use Wittgenstein’s terminology, a ‘family’ of such features—part of the ‘family’ of features constituting Roman art itself. To push it further, the most inappropriate answer to the question, ‘What is “Flavian” about “Flavian Rome”?’⁷ would be to produce a list of defining attributes distinguishing the period 69–96 CE from all other ‘periods’. The cultural conditions and artistic conventions and practices of this time, like its politics and social structure, have much in common with conditions, conventions, practices and social structures earlier and later, but they are neither identical with them nor identically manifested. They are part of the evolving social and cultural reality of ancient Rome, and are different from, but also similar to, all other parts. In foreshadowing the chapters to come, my purpose in this introduction is not to find and define a Flavian essence or even *mentalité*,⁷ but rather to outline some of these similarities and differences characterising Roman politics, society and culture at the centre of the empire during the climactic years of the first century CE.

⁵ Wittgenstein (1958) secs 67ff.

⁶ On this and related matters, see Henderson, pp. 229–54. References to scholars by name and page references only are to their chapters in this volume.

⁷ On the futility of *mentalité*-hunting, see Lloyd (1990).

1. *New Emperors*

exin se Curibus uirtus caelestis ad astra
 efferet, et sacris augebit nomen Iulis
 bellatrix gens bacifero nutrita Sabino.

(Silius Italicus, *Punica* 3.594–6)

Then from Cures heavenly *uirtus* shall soar starward,
 And a warrior line, nourished on Sabine berries,
 Shall augment the name of the sacred Iulii.

For Romans power and meaning were the same—the possession of potency, value, vitality, force: *VALERE*. Power was necessarily the determining node of Roman culture. But how to ensure the legitimacy of power, especially imperial power, which had acquired acceptance because of its association with a Roman *gens*, maintained through an essentially unique ‘compact between the army and the heirs of Julius Caesar’?⁸ Silius’ *post factum* prophecy catches nothing of the problems facing Vespasian nor of the strategies adopted to address them. As Ronald Mellor points out, the end of the Julio-Claudian dynasty produced ‘the previously unthinkable: anyone could be acclaimed emperor’.⁹ Vespasian had to move and to move quickly. His most immediate concern was his projected relationship to the Julio-Claudians. Vespasian, who had prospered under Nero, securing the proconsulship of Africa in 62 CE and the command of the eastern army against the Jews in 67 CE,¹⁰ was careful to dissociate himself from the self-apotheotic emperor—hence his populist behaviour (Cass. Dio 66.10.1, 10.4–11.3), his insistence on a late republican neo-veristic style in one of his principal portrait types, and his building of the ‘people’s palace’, the Colosseum, on Nero’s private lake; but he also took care to associate himself with the *gens* to which the tyrant belonged. Like Galba, he took the name of Caesar, now synonymous with power. And, though treating Galba with respect

⁸ Mellor, p. 70.

⁹ Mellor, p. 70.

¹⁰ His official title is not known, perhaps *legatus Augusti pro praetore exercitus Iudaici* (‘Propraetorian legate of the army of Judaea’): see Levick (1999) 29 and Chilver (1979) *ad Tac. Hist.* 1.10.3. Jerusalem fell in September 70 CE (Joseph. *Bj* 6.407, 435), although there is some uncertainty concerning the precise day (2, 8 or 26 September) because of the Macedonian dating adopted by Josephus (see Levick [1999] 42).

and adopting Galba's theme of *Libertas Restituta*,¹¹ he modelled himself in part on the great Augustus, building a forum to rival his, restoring Augustus' Theatre of Marcellus, and taking up motifs of his coinage (e.g., *Pax*, *Victoria*, *Aegypto Capta* which becomes *Iudaea Capta*)¹² and aspects of his literary patronage (Suet. *Vesp.* 17–19).¹³ Augustus in 29 BCE had marked the end of the republican civil wars by closing the doors of the Temple of Janus; Vespasian aimed for analogous symbolism by closing the Temple of Janus in 71 CE after his Jewish triumph (Oros. 7.3.7–8, 9.8–9, 19.4—citing Tacitus). Also in 69–70 CE appear coins heralding Titus and Domitian as *Principes Iuuentutis*, the title applied by Augustus to his grandsons, Gaius and Lucius.¹⁴ In his Temple of Peace, completed in 75 CE, Vespasian not only provided a public art gallery to invert and replace the private collection of the Domus Aurea, but created a building which enshrined the central theme of Augustus' principate, and which combined in one complex the literary function of Augustus' Temple of Apollo (two of the halls that flanked the Templum Pacis were libraries) and the military triumphalism of the Temple of Mars Ultor (hence the dedication of prime spoils from Jerusalem in Vespasian's temple).¹⁵ Even the Colosseum had Augustan associations, being widely regarded as the fulfilment of one of Augustus' projects (Suet. *Vesp.* 9.1). It was perhaps to associate himself with Augustus or at least

¹¹ See, e.g., McCrum and Woodhead (1961) 25, 46 (*BMC* 1.287 no. 5, 2.118 no. 549). The *Libertas* motif disappears from Flavian coins after 71 CE.

¹² See Ehrenberg and Jones (1976) 13, 15, 16, 18; McCrum and Woodhead (1961) 43–5, 47; Levick (1999) pl. 21 (*BMC* 1.105 no. 647, 106 no. 650, 101 no. 617, 112 no. 691; 2.120 no. 559, 131 no. 604, 81 no. 397, 129 no. 597); for Augustus also see *RIC* 1.31–2, 45–9, 252, 474, 476 ('Aug.'). Note the Augustan associations of the use made of the 'cult of Virtues' by Vespasian, reflected in the motifs of the latter's coinage: see Fears (1981b) 899–90; Fears (1981c) 813. Also of interest is the 'Roma Resurgens' legend on Vespasianic coins (e.g., McCrum and Woodhead [1961] 42 [*BMC* 2.87 no. 425]; Levick [1999] pl. 16), which remodels Galba's 'Roma Renascens', and, while original to Vespasian, invests the Flavian building program with the same significance as that of Augustus. Allied to this is the large number of Vespasianic coins showing public buildings.

¹³ Vespasian's most famous display of literary patronage was his founding of chairs of Latin and Greek rhetoric in Rome and Athens at an annual salary of 100,000 *sestertii* paid from the *fiscus* or imperial exchequer.

¹⁴ See, e.g., the bronze coin from Lugdunum in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (Levick [1999] pl. 26), or the *denarius* at McCrum and Woodhead (1961) 85 (*BMC* 2.7).

¹⁵ For the Temple of Pax or Peace, see Joseph. *Bj* 7.158–62; also Suet. *Vesp.* 9.1, Cass. Dio 66.15.1.

the Julio-Claudian *gens* that Vespasian, in the second and less frequent of his portrait types, chose a younger, more idealised image.¹⁶

Claudius, too, was an important model for Vespasian, who had received military advancement, triumphal *regalia* (for victories in Britain), priesthoods and the consulship (51 CE) in his principate (Suet. *Vesp.* 4.1–2), and who not only completed the Temple of Divus Claudius begun by Agrippina and restored his cult (Suet. *Vesp.* 9.1), but restored the Claudian double aqueduct of the Aqua Claudia and Aqua Anio Novus.¹⁷ Claudian precedent also lay behind Vespasian's extension of the *pomerium* and his continuation of the conquest of Britain. This reversion to the *auctoritas* of the early Julio-Claudians was made explicit in the *Lex de Imperio Vespasiani* of December 69 CE,¹⁸ which, in addition to conferring on Vespasian *imperium*, *tribunitia potestas*, and universal authority, 'publicly based the imperial power', as Mellor observes, 'on that of Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius'.¹⁹ It was appropriate that one of the 'signs' portending Vespasian's death was the sudden opening of the Augustan mausoleum (Suet. *Vesp.* 23.4), as was reported to have happened in the last days of Augustus' great-grandson, Nero (Suet. *Nero* 46.2). Vespasian's lieutenant and senior adviser, Gaius Licinius Mucianus, on the other hand, seems to have played Agrippa to Vespasian's Augustus: like Agrippa, he was 'the emperor's partner' (*socius imperii*, Tac. *Hist.* 2.83), and possessed the emperor's ring (Cass. Dio 66.2.2; cf. 53.30.2); like Agrippa, he was honoured with a third consulship; like Agrippa, he conveniently predeceased his *princeps*.²⁰ Indeed, given the overt similarities between Domitian's reign and that of Nero, not unnoticed by the Roman historians, the Flavian dynasty could be seen from a distance as a replay of the Julio-Claudians in fast-forward mode.

¹⁶ On the two main portrait types of Vespasian, see Pollini (1984) 549–50.

¹⁷ See McCrum and Woodhead (1961) 408a (*ILS* 218). For a focus on Claudius as Vespasian's model, see Levick (1999) 73–4; Griffin (2000) 19–25.

¹⁸ The *Lex* is preserved on a bronze plaque which came to light in the *trecento* and is now located in the Lateran at Rome: McCrum and Woodhead (1961) 1 (*ILS* 244); Levick (1999) pl. 12. For a discussion of the provisions of the law, which legalised any action deemed by Vespasian to benefit Rome and gave retroactive validation to the emperor's actions, see Levick (1999) 85–6; Griffin (2000) 11–12.

¹⁹ Mellor, p. 81.

²⁰ Mucianus also seems to have been content to play Vespasian's 'Agrippa'. His lack of sons, inferior military experience and flamboyant homosexuality (Suet. *Vesp.* 13.1) made him a much less attractive candidate than Vespasian for the principate itself: see Levick (1999) 53.

The sixty-year old Vespasian,²¹ however, was too much of a rustic Italian to invent a noble pedigree (Suet. *Vesp.* 12); and, though initially he lacked *auctoritas* and a certain *maiestas* (Suet. *Vesp.* 7.2), he saw what little effect Galba's noble ancestry and his attempts to trace it to Jupiter (Suet. *Galb.* 2) had had on the security of Galba's power. He neither camouflaged his *ignobilitas* nor, unlike Augustus, the realities of power (he and his sons, especially Titus, monopolised the ordinary consulship); and he exhibited his intention to found a dynasty in words (Suet. *Vesp.* 25.1; Cass. Dio 66.12.1), familial titles and familial office.²² The reappearance of *Fortuna Redux* on Rome's coinage heralded the Flavian victory as 'divinely ordained' and suggested analogies with Augustus,²³ but the *Aeternitas* and (from 71 CE) *Providentia*, also proclaimed on the coinage, made it clear that the *telos* of that 'divinely ordained' victory was not the *Res Publica Restituta* of Augustus nor the *Libertas Restituta* of Galba (discarded after initial numismatic replay),²⁴ but *Principatus Restitutus*. There were of course new laws (e.g., on slavery, citizenship, moneylending), new provinces (Cilicia, and the re-annexed Achaea and Lycia, the latter to be joined to Pamphylia), new policies, especially in the financial area. Vespasian, a frugal, Sabine financier's son, introduced several fiscal policies, primarily designed to raise enough taxes to make good earlier imperial indulgence (both Neronian and Vitellian) and the financial and material losses of civil war.

²¹ He was born on 17 November 9 CE: Suet. *Vesp.* 2.1.

²² The consulship numbers for Vespasian's principate: Vespasian 9 'ordinary', Titus 7 'ordinary', Domitian 1 'ordinary', 4 (possibly 5) 'suffect'. Domitian also held the urban praetorship in 70 CE with consular *imperium*. Vespasian held tribunician power, *maius imperium*, the office of *Pontifex Maximus*, and the titles of *Imperator*, *Caesar*, *Augustus*, *Pater Patriae* and (after 73 CE) *Censor*; his sons were given the titles *Caesar* and *Princeps Iuuentutis*. Titus was also granted tribunician power (from 1 July 71 CE), was joint censor with Vespasian in 73–74 CE, and shared with his father the title *Imperator* on coins and inscriptions—and in literary texts: see Plin. *HN* 3.66, 7.162. Vespasian and Titus are united too in being the subject of the prayers of the Arval Brothers: McCrum and Woodhead (1961) 6–8. By the time Titus acceded to the throne, he had received jointly with Vespasian fourteen imperial salutations.

²³ For *Fortuna Redux* on Flavian coins, see, e.g., *BMC* 2.114 no. 529, 127 no. 589*, 130 no. 603§, 195; on Augustan coins *BMC* 1 pl. 7 nos 10–13 (which show the altar to *Fortuna Redux* erected by the senate in 19 BCE on the occasion of Augustus' return to Rome). See Fears (1981b) 899.

²⁴ For *Aeternitas*, see McCrum and Woodhead (1961) 90 (*BMC* 2.194); *BMC* 2.111. For *Providentia*, see *BMC* 2 pl. 23 no. 12, 142–3, nos 642†, 649§. For *Libertas*, see above, n. 11.

According to Suetonius (*Vesp.* 16.3) forty thousand million *sestertii* were required to enable the state to stand upright again (*ut res publica stare posset*), although modern sceptical historians have corrected this to four thousand million (i.e., five years' normal taxation revenue).²⁵ The restoration of cities, roads, bridges and aqueducts was an expensive business, especially the restoration and development of Rome itself. Vespasian's own life style, simple, frugal, quintessentially 'Roman', became the new paradigm for the new age (*Tac. Ann.* 3.55.2–5). His financial policies (inevitably) generated much criticism; even Vespasian's favourable biographer castigates his *pecuniae cupiditas* (*Suet. Vesp.* 16.1). The silver coinage had been debased by Nero; Vespasian debased it further. He increased old taxes and generated new ones (he even taxed Roman latrines: *Joseph. BJ* 7.218; *Suet. Vesp.* 22.3; *Cass. Dio* 66.14.5; 66.7.2, 8.3);²⁶ he reappropriated public property and exploited it;²⁷ and he created three new provincial imperial treasuries or *fisci* (the *fiscus Alexandrinus*, *Asiaticus* and *Iudaicus*). The *fiscus Iudaicus* was the most notorious and involved a harsh, four-fold expansion of the previous Jewish temple levy, now paid to the victor god, Jupiter Capitolinus. Stories abound concerning Vespasian's avarice and financially motivated prosecutions and grants of citizenship. But Suetonius concedes (*Vesp.* 17–18) that the emperor made generous provision to impoverished senators and to disaster-struck provincials, and especially encouraged literature and the arts, and that he 'made the best use of ill-gotten gains' (*male partis optime usus est*, *Vesp.* 16.3). What resulted from Vespasian's policies was not only a public works program to rival that of Augustus but the financial reinvigoration of the empire itself. The proliferation of inscribed monuments during Vespasian's reign alone attests to a restored social and commercial confidence. There were lessons here which even Domitian was loath to discard. The final Flavian emperor seems to have inherited sufficient financial priorities to ensure adequate imperial income for domestic and foreign purposes.²⁸ Indeed the *tertius heres* levied the Jewish tax 'most fiercely' (*acerbissime*, *Suet. Dom.* 12.2).

²⁵ For example, Levick (1999) 95; Griffin (2000) 26. For a recent account of Vespasian's financial policies, see Levick (1999) 95–106.

²⁶ Interestingly, Vespasian exempted from public taxation doctors and teachers: McCrum and Woodhead (1961) 458 (*FIR* 1.77).

²⁷ See, e.g., McCrum and Woodhead (1961) 447; Levick (1999) pl. 23.

²⁸ See the analysis of Jones (1992) 72–9.

But the goal was not simply or primarily financial. 'Financial security meant political security.'²⁹ And, for Vespasian, political security meant dynasty.

But Vespasian was a brilliant military commander first and foremost (he had earned the *ornamenta triumphalia* in his mid-thirties, and he received some twenty imperial salutations during his reign). And as surviving commander-in-chief of the military chaos of 69 CE, he was never forgetful of the basis of his power (hence the assumption of the official title *Imperator* as a *praenomen*, the focus on it in inscriptions and coinage, and the adoption of 1 July 69 CE as *dies imperii*—the day of Vespasian's acclamation by the Egyptian legions),³⁰ and introduced several military changes to ensure that power's stability. He was also concerned to strengthen Rome's frontiers. In 73–74 CE he joined the Rhine and Danube frontiers by appropriating the Black Forest area of southern Germany known as the Agri Decumates, thereby facilitating communication, transport and troop mobility between the German and Danubian provinces. In the east, in addition to the re-annexation of Achaea and Lycia, provinces were enlarged through reorganisation and territorial expansion (Byzantium, Samos, Rhodes, Armenia Minor, Commagene and Cilicia Tracheia were all annexed)³¹ and fortified, transforming the area west of the Euphrates into a secure militarised zone.

What was most new, however, about this non-Julio-Claudian principate (and marked a major cultural change) was the creation by Vespasian of 'a new aristocracy of power', based on a shrewder and politically more stable foundation than the traditional Roman model of family interconnections, of which he made remarkably little use (unlike Augustus, who used his large extended family in a wide variety of administrative posts—it was indeed Vespasian's good fortune that his extended family was far from substantial: his wife and brother were both dead, and he never remarried). As Mellor's examination reveals,³² the administrative and political elite that followed in the wake of the cataclysm of 69 CE contains few Flavian relatives (most

²⁹ Levick (1999) 106.

³⁰ On the *dies imperii*, see Tac. *Hist.* 2.79; Suet. *Vesp.* 6.3. Vespasian deliberately does not adopt the date (21 December 69 CE) of the *Lex de Imperio Vespasiani*; he treats the army, not the senate, as his imperial electors.

³¹ All except Armenia Minor are listed at Suet. *Vesp.* 8.4.

³² Mellor, pp. 84–101.

notably, Petillius Cerialis, Caesennius Paetus, Arrecinus Clemens, the younger Flavius Sabinus), but rather a bias towards Vespasian's military supporters in the east. Vespasian had inherited the military *clientela* of Corbulo among the eastern legions, which not only constituted the most disciplined and experienced of Rome's armies, a proud and self-conscious military machine ('Corbulo's men'), but was also filled with officers of low birth possessing a real capacity for leadership. 'This was to become the core of the Flavian party.'³³ The only other consular stationed in the east was Mucianus, whose unambiguous backing of Vespasian ensured not only his own subsequent political elevation but that of the eastern officers stationed under him. There was also a strategy to include senatorial insiders within the new structure (experienced 'survivors' such as Vibius Crispus, Eprius Marcellus, Valerius Messalinus, and the future emperor Nerva), as well as to adlect new senators, especially from Vespasian's equestrian supporters, and to use quaestorships (twenty new quaestors were created annually), priesthoods, suffect (rarely ordinary) consulships, the urban prefecture, curatorships, provincial governorships, and adlection into the patrician order to generate the new leadership. Vespasian avoided the abuses of the Claudian and Neronian courts by displaying his own accessibility,³⁴ and by not hesitating to reward merit in members of the senatorial class and admit them to the circle of his power. This reformation of Rome's elite set the stage for the century of political stability which followed, determining 'the shape and direction of political and cultural life until the death of Commodus in 193'.³⁵ The great emperors of the next century, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus, Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius, were descended from men elevated in the Vespasianic disposition. It should also be added that throughout the empire Latin and Roman citizenship was extended—to cities, towns, men, especially in Spain and

³³ Mellor, p. 79.

³⁴ Suetonius describes him as 'unassuming/respectful and lenient' (*ciuilis et clemens*, *Vesp.* 12.1). *Ciuitas*, as Jones (2000) 78 observes, 'was the quality expected of citizens' and involved a code of behaviour based upon respect. It is used by Suetonius in his assessment of emperors. So, too, is *clementia*, which, Jones notes, is attributed by Suetonius to only three Caesars: Iulius, Augustus and Vespasian. Cassius Dio represents Vespasian as 'having the common touch' (65.11.1), and also reports (66.10.4) that he preferred to receive visitors in the Gardens of Sallust rather than on the Julio-Claudian Palatine.

³⁵ Mellor, p. 69.

Gaul,³⁶ from which leading men were recruited for Rome's administration. 'More than any of his predecessors', Mellor remarks, 'Vespasian became emperor of the entire empire rather than merely of the senate, the Roman *plebs*, and the army'.³⁷

The same could not, however, be said for his second son—and only briefly for the first. Titus, publicly groomed for the principate (indeed he was all but co-*princeps* with Vespasian),³⁸ emphasised continuity with his father not only by proclaiming on his official coinage (80–81 CE) the selfsame virtues as his father,³⁹ but also often by portraying there *Diuus Augustus Vespasianus* himself, sometimes togate and radiate in the manner of *Diuus Augustus*, sometimes in the act of handing to Titus the *regimen orbis* ('the rudder of world'), above the Vespasianic legend of *Providentia*.⁴⁰ In addition, Titus' unique 'restoration' series of coins, issued in bronze for increased circulation,⁴¹ served to link the new *princeps* not only to Augustus but to Vespasian's other two models of emulation, Claudius and Galba.⁴² Like his father, too, Titus devoted himself to Claudian-style building programs, renewing and expanding the empire's infrastructure of roads, aqueducts and utilitarian public buildings.⁴³ He completed the Flavian Amphitheatre, begun by his father, by adding an entire storey, and celebrated its inaugural games; and he erected in the parkland of Nero's Domus Aurea something else for the Roman people: his great Baths.

Titus was, however, his own man, and there were important innovations in administrative policy during his brief reign, and, despite his reputation for generosity (Suet. *Tit.* 7.3), the Roman economy retained its Vespasianic health.⁴⁴ His greatest innovation concerned

³⁶ Most remarkable was Vespasian's granting of the *ius Latii* ('Latin right') to *universa Hispania* ('the whole of Spain', Plin. *HN* 3.30).

³⁷ Mellor, p. 82.

³⁸ See above, n. 22. Suetonius' assessment: after arriving in Rome Titus never ceased to act as 'partner and even guardian of imperial power' (*participem atque etiam tutorem imperii*, *Tit.* 6.1).

³⁹ E.g., *BMC* 2.241 no. 106; 255 nos 153, 156, 158; 264–5 nos 196, 199, 203, 206; 273 no. 238. See Fears (1981b) 901.

⁴⁰ For *Diuus Augustus Vespasianus* (*sestertii*), see *BMC* 2.269–70 nos 221–5; for the *regimen orbis* (*sestertii*), see *BMC* 2.259 nos 178–81. On Titus' 'continuity with Vespasian' see Griffin (2000) 46–9.

⁴¹ See Jones (1984) 121, and 121–2 on Titus' coinage more generally.

⁴² *BMC* 2.281–91 nos 261–80, 297–302, 305.

⁴³ He furthered the Claudian association by commissioning two statues of Claudius' son, his childhood friend, Britannicus: Suet. *Tit.* 2.

⁴⁴ See Jones (1984) 122–34 (administration), 140–6 (economy), who judges Titus'

his own political image. The pre-accession reputation for *saeuitia* (as commander of the praetorian guard), *luxuria* and *rapacitas* ('cruelty', 'decadence', 'greed', Suet. *Tit.* 6.1–7.1) was pointedly replaced by an image of himself as benevolent, caring father of the Roman people and its empire.⁴⁵ This reconstructed image was displayed not simply in his (likely) oath not to execute any senator and his abolition of charges of *maiestas*, but, more tangibly, in his sacrifice of revenues from various provincial cities and in his handling of petitions (Suet. *Tit.* 8.1; 9.1; Cass. Dio 66.19.1–2).⁴⁶ It was famously tested in the natural disasters of 79 and 80 CE, when the devastation caused by the eruption of Vesuvius was followed by yet another great fire in Rome, this time attended by plague. Titus emerged from the events with his reputation for *beneuolentia*, concern and even fatherly love enhanced, a seemingly fit bearer of Suetonius' remarkable, if unoriginal, description of him as *amor ac deliciae generis humani* ('the passion and delight of the human race', Suet. *Tit.* 1.1; also Suet. *Tit.* 8.3–4; Cass. Dio 66.24.3–4).⁴⁷

When the imperial Titus' new image was prevented from any more contact with reality by an early death, the Roman world was left with his declared *consors successorque* (Suet. *Tit.* 9.3), Domitian, whose bitterness at being restricted to the dark wings of power was only underscored by numismatic proclamations of the *pietas* between him and his brother (on *sestertii* of 80 CE).⁴⁸ A tendency to personal autocracy had been evident since his incursion on the Roman scene in 69–70 CE, which Tacitus critiques as imperial son playing the role of emperor before his father's arrival (*Hist.* 3.86, 4.2). But at the beginning of his principate he was concerned, like Titus, to emphasise Flavian continuities, appointing and advancing men favoured by

'generosity' as 'illusory', 'the deliberate result of his own propaganda' (145–6); Cass. Dio (66.19.3a) similarly commends Titus' 'parsimony'.

⁴⁵ 'Image' is chosen purposefully. Titus was a graduate of the Neronian court in which the right image ensured survival. He had learned from Vespasian what was likely to work: see Jones (1984) 115.

⁴⁶ Titus' dismissal of his foreign lover, Queen Berenice, immediately upon his accession (Suet. *Tit.* 7.2), and his recall of Musonius Rufus from exile (Euseb. *Chron.* under 79 CE: *Titus Musonium Rufum philosophum de exilio reuocat*) were part of this same self-imaging behaviour.

⁴⁷ The reputation did not dissolve: Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 10.1; *Epit. de Caesaribus* 10. For an earlier version of Suetonius' famous phrase, see Cic. *Phil.* 6.12, where Lucius Antonius is called (ironically) the *amores deliciaeque* of the Roman People.

⁴⁸ See, e.g., *RIC* 2 pl. 4.58.

his father and brother, deifying the latter, and creating a new priesthood of *Titiales* to join the *Flauiales* of his divine father.⁴⁹ Among other 'displays' of *pietas*, he built the Arch of Titus at the head of the Roman Forum, completed the Baths of Titus and the Temple of Divus Vespasianus (now renamed the Temple of Vespasian and Titus), further refined the decor of the Colosseum, and erected in the Campus Martius the Porticus Divorum with its shrines of Vespasian and Titus and on the Quirinal a new temple to the Flavian *gens*.⁵⁰ The initial numismatic repetition of the motifs of the previous reign seems to stem from a similar imperial intent.⁵¹

His reign, however, showed marked discontinuities as well as continuities from the start, especially in the area of politically motivated or even arbitrary executions of leading citizens, which, though increasing later in Domitian's principate, and culminating almost predictably in a reign of terror, are testified for the whole fifteen years. But tyrannical as it was, at least in the eyes of the Roman elite and the Roman historiographical tradition,⁵² Domitian's principate was the context for one of the truly great periods of Roman cultural production, most particularly in the fields of architecture, sculpture, and literature. And it seems to several scholars of the period to have been administratively efficient.⁵³ Domitian's involvement in the law courts and in imperial administration is credited by Suetonius (*Dom.* 8.1–2) as being unusually just, and his involvement in the latter is represented as responsible for increased honesty on the part of city

⁴⁹ The priesthood lasted at least to the Severan era (*CIL* 8.7062), when the Temple of Vespasian was restored (as the inscription of the architrave attests: *CIL* 6.938).

⁵⁰ For discussion of the obscure and complex Templum Gentis Flaviae and its reminiscences of the Augustan mausoleum and Ara Pacis, see Paris (1994).

⁵¹ Griffin (2000) 58. There is a certain sparseness about this numismatic repetition. As Fears (1981b) 901 observes, only four imperial 'Virtues' associated with Vespasian and Titus are found on Domitian's early coinage (81–84 CE): *Pax*, *Victoria*, *Fortuna* and *Salus*.

⁵² The Roman historiographical tradition was, of course, created by the Roman elite, but is not simply to be dismissed for that. See Wilson (pp. 523–42), who argues that the writers of the post-Domitianic settlement deserve more credence than they have recently received. Worth noting is that by the time of Marcus Aurelius a biographer such as Amyntianus paired the life of Domitian with that of an actual *tyrannos*, Dionysius of Syracuse.

⁵³ See especially Jones (1992) 197, and, among others, Syme (1958) 210, 629 and Garzetti (1974) 276. The younger Pliny's letters to Trajan seem to support the 'administratively efficient' view of Domitian.

officials and provincial governors. Some have doubted this, preferring to see Domitian's reign as manifesting 'the censoriousness of a disciplinarian'.⁵⁴ Certainly his creation of the officials known as *curatores rei publicae*, who were sent to provincial cities to investigate their finances,⁵⁵ could be variously described. Nevertheless, although under financial stress from 85 CE, when we witness alleged prosecutions for gain (Cass. Dio 67.4.5–6; Suet. *Dom.* 12.1–2) and a devaluation of the coinage, his principate brought about several social improvements, including land entitlement (Suet. *Dom.* 9.3), an improvement of the water supply, and a massive public building program, which was transparently political and self-validatory in purpose,⁵⁶ but which also served for the adornment and increased commercial efficiency of the capital. The Via Domitiana between Sinuessa and Puteoli, completed in the year before Domitian's death, was a social benefit as well as a political icon. Not all rejoiced in the tyrant's passing. According to Suetonius, the people responded with indifference (*indifferenter*), and the army with great distress (*grauissime tulit*). The latter even pushed for his deification (*Dom.* 23.1). Domitian had treated the army well, both by using it to implement a vigorous, aggressive frontier policy, and by rewarding it with pay and donatives (Suet. *Dom.* 7.3; Cass. Dio 67.3.5). The praetorians especially seemed less than pleased with the removal of the emperor, and caused considerable trouble for his successor. The knee-jerk *damnatio memoriae* was primarily senatorial.

2. Old Structures

quo modo pessimis imperatoribus sine fine dominati nem, ita quamuis egregiis modum libertatis placere.

(Tacitus, *Historiae* 4.8.4)

As the worst emperors want unlimited power, so even the best want a limit to liberty.

⁵⁴ Griffin (2000) 79.

⁵⁵ See *ILS* 1017 and Syme (1977) 38–49 for L. Caesennius Sospes as *curator*.

⁵⁶ It was Domitian's practice to put his own name, rather than that of the original builder (as Vespasian had tended to do), on the monuments which he restored (Suet. *Dom.* 5).

A new *princeps* was still a *princeps*, a master of a mastered world. And as the Flavians' triumphal procession in 71 CE demonstrated in its symbolic parade of the prime spoils and iconic properties of a conquered Judaea—the silver trumpets, the table of shew bread, the seven-branched candlestick, the names of cities, rivers, mountains—,⁵⁷ Rome's relationship with that world was of conqueror to conquered. Rome's empire was a military hegemony over an immense body of land, inhabited by some sixty million people and consisting of thousands of distinct communities, ethnicities and value-/belief-systems, ruled through a network of over a thousand towns and cities,⁵⁸ in which the conqueror's magistrates attempted to control and administer their own urban populations and those of the countryside around them. There was more than one model for Rome's relationship to its peoples, but, as Jane Cody's analysis of the coinage reveals,⁵⁹ the antique notion of conqueror and conquered was the one most favoured by the Flavians. The numismatic representation of conquered peoples throughout this period showed a marked preference for imagery in which a province was represented as conquered and mourning or bound, often beneath a victory trophy (the *capta* type), or as suing for favour (the *supplicatio/adoratio* type). Both these types featured in late republican and Augustan coinage, but are not evidenced among the coins of Augustus' successors until their revival by Vespasian. Two more nuanced types, also occurring, if infrequently, in late republican and Augustan coinage, *restitutio* (in which the province is raised up by a representative of Rome) and *fides* (in which the province stands on nearly equal footing with Rome), with their accompanying ideology of a cooperative partnership between Rome and its provinces, were rarely used by the Flavians, whose coinage modelled itself conservatively on the coins of their predecessors to present Roman mastery and power as absolute.

⁵⁷ Contrary to the imagery of the Arch of Titus, the triumph was a joint one of Vespasian and Titus, and the latter's triumphal chariot followed that of the *princeps*. Behind both chariots trailed Domitian, mounted on a horse which was itself a 'spectacle'. See Joseph. *BJ* 7.123–57 and Beard, p. 558 on this 'key dynastic moment'.

⁵⁸ The overall population of the Roman empire is generally estimated at this time to have been about 60 million. Frier (2000) 814 would put the figure somewhat below 60 million, which he estimates the population of the empire to have reached in 164 CE.

⁵⁹ Cody, pp. 103–23.

Judaea, Britain and Germany, all subjected to energetic Roman military activity during the Flavian period, were never represented as other than abject, uncivilised, mastered peoples. The ideology of a Hadrian, who promoted the idea of empire as a union of loyal provinces, and who vigorously revived the iconography of the *restitutio* and *fides* coin types, was never even adumbrated.

The mastered were not only distant foes. Despite the attempt by Vespasian to image himself as a man of the people, as *ciuilis* or κοινός, through personal behaviour (his famed accessibility), through official imagery (especially, the neo-republicanism of much of his official portraiture) and through such populist moves as the erection of the Colosseum in the tyrant's private estate, the domination of the *princeps* was unambiguous. Both Vespasian and Domitian made themselves censor (the former jointly with Titus in 73–74 CE, the latter without a colleague in 85 CE and later in the same year for life),⁶⁰ and used the censorship to enhance their personal control. Vespasian used its powers to remove philosophers and to pack the senate with his supporters;⁶¹ Domitian to impose upon the Roman elite puritanical legislation which he himself conspicuously ignored. The latter's legislative vigour was as unrestrained as it was restraining. He revived both the *Lex Scantinia*, which banned intercourse between free-born Roman males, and the Augustan legislation on adultery, the *Lex Iulia de Adulteriis Coercendis*; he restricted women's inheritance rights through enforcement of the *Lex Voconia*; and he issued a prohibition on pantomimes on the grounds of their obscenity (Mart. *Epigr.* 6.4, 7, 22, 45; Stat. *Silv.* 5.2.102; Plin. *Pan.* 42.1; 46; Suet. *Dom.* 7.1; 8.3; Cass. Dio 67.12.1). Domitian had already in 83 CE as *pontifex maximus* revived and implemented the death penalty for Vestal Virgins who broke their vow of chastity, even insisting later in his reign (89 or 90 CE) on its archaic form, live-burial (the fate of the chief Vestal Cornelia—her lovers were beaten to death with rods in the Comitium: Suet. *Dom.* 8.3–4; cf. Cass. Dio 67.3.3–4). He had also in 82 or 83 CE introduced a law against cas-

⁶⁰ Domitian's liking for this title, *censor perpetuus*, is reflected in its frequency on his coins from 85 CE onwards.

⁶¹ Suetonius mentions that the senatorial order had been greatly reduced in size because of recent 'murder' (*caedes*) and 'long-standing neglect' (*vetus negligentia*, *Vesp.* 9.2); and Vespasian's adfections to the senate, although governed by the need to reward his own partisans and to stabilise his own power, were also geared in part simply to get the senate functioning.

tration (Mart. *Epigr.* 2.60; 6.2; 9.6, 8; Suet. *Dom.* 7.1; Cass. Dio 67.2.3)—which, of course, did not prevent him from enjoying the favours of his own *delicatus*, Earinus: an irony not unnoted by Martial in *Epigrams* 9. Domitian followed Augustus, too, in trying to control time, apparently shifting the *Saturnalia* to the Kalends of December,⁶² but more importantly surpassing Augustus in the personal naming of months: September and October were renamed, respectively, *Germanicus* and *Domitianus* (Mart. *Epigr.* 9.1; Plut. *Num.* 19.4; Suet. *Dom.* 13.3; Cass. Dio 67.4.4).⁶³ He surpassed him also in his overt association with the gods in sculpture (in the Cancellaria Reliefs,⁶⁴ for example, or in his representation as Hercules)⁶⁵ and on coins (where Minerva especially is prominent).⁶⁶

Indeed Domitian seems to have returned personal autocracy to the Gaian and Neronian levels by his introduction of an unusual form of address: the notorious *dominus et deus* ('master and god', Mart. *Epigr.* 5.5; 7.34; 8.82; 9.28; Dio Chrys. 45.1; Suet. *Dom.* 13.1–2; Dio Cass. 67.4.7, 13.4).⁶⁷ His appropriation of the consulship (ten 'ordinary' consulships in the fifteen year reign) and perpetual censorship (since 85 CE), his 'dictatorial' requirement of twenty-four lictors (double the consular number) and insistence on wearing triumphal dress when appearing in public, and his use, with one exception,⁶⁸ of imperial freedmen as his private secretaries (almost a reversion to Claudian

⁶² Newlands, p. 505.

⁶³ Domitian acquired the name 'Germanicus' for his 'defeat' of the Chatti in Germany in 83 CE. Its popularity with Domitian is indicated by its appearance on all the coins issued in the following year.

⁶⁴ Figs 46–52.

⁶⁵ Mart. *Epigr.* 9.64 and 65 refer to the statue of Hercules with the features of Domitian in the Domitianic temple to the god, an inversion perhaps of the statue of Augustus with Apollo's features said to have been situated in the Palatine library: see Kleiner (1992) 82.

⁶⁶ Minerva figures frequently on the reverse side of Domitian's coins and, in the later years, even in his company: *RIC* 2.404 ('Dom.'). Philostratus adds that Domitian claimed to be Minerva's son (*VA* 7.24 and 26). Other gods figured on Domitian's coins include Jupiter, Pax, Ceres, Mars and Victory. The thunderbolt is also a common motif, sometimes appearing in Domitian's right hand as if the *princeps* were a second Jupiter. See *RIC* 2 'Dom.' *passim*; Hannestad (1986) fig. 90. Augustus was rarely represented in the company of gods: for late Augustan (or Tiberian?) instances, see the Gemma Augustea and the silver cup from Boscoreale (the latter in Vermeule [1968] fig. 66A, on which see Fears [1981d] 822–3).

⁶⁷ The absence of this 'title' from inscriptions and coins does nothing (*pace* Jones [1992] 108–9) to suggest its fiction. See also Dominik (1994a) 58–60.

⁶⁸ The exception: the equestrian Gnaeus Octavius Titinius Capito, who was appointed as the imperial secretary *ab epistulis* in the 90s CE, an office which he

days) further enlarged the distance between ruler and ruled. The pyramidal structure of the Roman social hierarchy was further underscored by Domitian's revival, as part of his program as censor (Suet. *Dom.* 8.3), of the *Lex Iulia Theatralis*,⁶⁹ which ensured the display of Rome's intricate pyramidal structure at the theatrical *ludi*: senators at the front followed by equestrians (to whom the first fourteen rows of theatrical seating were once more restricted), Vestals, freeborn seniors and juniors, *pullati* ('the dingy poor'), freedmen, *matronae*, prostitutes, gladiators, insolvent debtors, slaves—all arranged as for a grand photo-op of the Roman social structure. Martial points up the social danger of attempting to ignore (or lie about) these hierarchical divisions—the humiliation of forced removal by an usher:

edictum domini deque nostri,
quo subsellia certiora fiunt
et pueros eques ordines recepit,
dum laudat modo Phasis in theatro,
Phasis purpureis ruber lacernis,
et iactat tumido superbus ore:
'tandem commodius licet sedere,
nunc est reddita dignitas equestris;
turba non premimur, nec inquinamur'—
haec et talia dum refert supinus,
illas purpureas et arrogantes
iussit surgere Leitus lacernas.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 5.8)

The edict of our master and god,
By which benches were assigned more strictly
And the knights' rows made pure again,
Phasis was praising in the theatre just now—
Red Phasis in his purple cloak—
And proudly boasted, all puffed up:
'At last we can sit more comfortably,
Knightly dignity is now restored:
We're not crushed or soiled by the mob'—
As he repeated this and the like,

continued to hold under Nerva and for the initial part of Trajan's principate. To his *consilium*, of course, Domitian appointed both senators and equestrians (*adhibitis utriusque ordinis splendidis uiris*, 'consulting distinguished men of both orders', McCrum and Woodhead [1961] 462 [*FIR* 1.75]), as even the parody of Juvenal's *Satire* 4 concedes.

⁶⁹ The Augustan theatre law was itself a revival and modification of the *Lex Roscia Theatralis* of 67 BCE (Suet. *Aug.* 44).

Lolling back, Leitus told that purple
And arrogant cloak to get up.

This is no insignificant *faux pas*. There is a cluster of such poems in book 5 of Martial's *Epigrams* alone (5.14, 23, 25, 27, 35, 38, 41); they testify to a preoccupation with social place. The displayed urban hierarchy was everywhere. It was particularly evident during state festivals: in the fora, the theatres, the circuses, the temples. Domitian was extravagant in the provision of games and benefactions (Suet. *Dom.* 4.1, 5), although he could have learned this from his elder brother, whose costly inaugural games at the Colosseum, celebrated in Martial's *De Spectaculis*, lasted 'for a hundred days', if Cassius Dio is to be believed (66.25.4). Indeed one of the effects of the building of the Colosseum was to take hierarchical display literally to new heights, as the spectacle of Roman power was now accessible regularly to some 50,000 viewers. The importance of the Colosseum in Flavian self-imaging is reflected in its appearance on the coinage,⁷⁰ and under the last Flavian its arena became the main venue for the exhibition of power, with the complex political consequences discussed below.

In the great imperial palace built by Rabirius for Domitian on the Palatine the display of power was as detailed as it was overt. Statius, *Silvae* 4.2, discussed by David Fredrick,⁷¹ provides contemporary representation not only of the display but of the political and emotional stress of being subject to it, to the visual force of the exhibited power and its almost tactile instantiation in the emperor's gaze:

tectum augustum, ingens, non centum insigne columnis
sed quanta superos caelumque Atlante remisso
sustentare queant. stupet hoc uicina Tonantis
regia teque pari laetantur sede locatum
numina (nec magnum properes escendere caelum):
tanta patet moles effusaeque impetus aulae
liberior campi multumque amplexus operti
aetheros et tantum domino minor: ille penatis
implet et ingenti genio grauat. . . .

⁷⁰ See, for example, the *sestertius* of Titus in Hannestad (1986) fig. 77; *RIC* 2.110 ('Titus'), pl. 4.60.

⁷¹ Fredrick, pp. 214–19.

sed mihi non epulas Indisque innixa columnis
 robora Maurorum famulasque ex ordine turmas,
 ipsum, ipsum cupido tantum spectare uacauit
 tranquillum uultus et maiestate serena
 mulcentem radios summittentemque modeste
 fortunae uexilla suae; tamen ore nitebat
 dissimulatus honos.

(Statius, *Silvae* 4.2.18–26, 38–44)

An august house, massive, boasting not a hundred columns
 But the number needed to relieve Atlas and support
 The gods and heaven. The Thunderer's palace next door
 Gapes at it, and the gods rejoice that your home
 Matches theirs (but don't rush to climb the great heaven).
 Its great bulk stretches out and the hall's expansive sweep,
 More open than a plain's, embraces a great part
 Of the sky's cover: yet the master dwarfs it. He fills
 The house, weights it with massive genius . . .

Not the feast, not the Indian columns propping
 Moorish oak, nor the squads of servants in line,
 But he, he alone received all my desiring gaze,
 Tranquil in his features, his radiance caressed
 By majesty serene, as he modestly dipped
 The ensigns of his greatness; yet the hidden
 Glory glowed in his face.

The emotional and visual subjection of *Silvae* 4.2 is no exception. Statius' *Silvae* as a whole reflect the 'anxieties of an age in which government took on the dramatically new face of a divine monarchy';⁷² they are preoccupied with the role of Roman 'subjects', and reveal aspects of the conditions of speech and writing under Domitian's autocracy. *Silvae* 1.6, for example, as Carole Newlands' analysis shows,⁷³ examines the great Roman festival of the Saturnalia and its imperial control. What the poem shows is the enthusiastic response, the wonder and awe, expressed by a subject Roman people towards Domitian as benefactor and god (*nostri Iouis*, 'our Jupiter', *Silv.* 1.6.27)—a response which reinforces not only 'community' but also 'hierarchy', with Domitian as the link between earthly and heavenly order.⁷⁴ 'The stability of the regime' is dependent on Domitian's divine role. Roman religion had always been a mirror of the social hierarchy,

⁷² Newlands, p. 499.

⁷³ Newlands, pp. 499–522.

⁷⁴ Newlands, p. 503.

and the connection between magistracies and priesthoods was necessarily a close one: religious ritual confirmed the political order. Hence the Flavian emperors continued the tradition begun by Augustus of holding the office of *pontifex maximus*. But, while this period as a whole saw an increasing diversity of gods and religious practices (including those of Mithraism and the small, new Judaic sect of Christians)⁷⁵ and a general welcoming of that diversity,⁷⁶ and an expansion too in the provinces and even in Italian towns of the worship of the emperor himself,⁷⁷ deification of the current emperor in Rome remained unacceptable. For issues of imperial divinity were bound up with those of liberty, as Statius' poem testifies. On display in this poem are precisely the ramifications of divine autocracy for Roman liberty, including the liberty of the written word.

Martial similarly reflects Domitianic control of the word, nowhere more so than in the opening poems of *Epigrams* 1. Here the issues of writing, reading, reception and censorship are directly addressed in the preface and then replayed more gently in the opening four poems, which focus respectively on the poet (*Epigr.* 1.1), the reader (1.2), the book (1.3), and the censor (1.4). Martial's famous *apologia* to the censor Domitian contains specific instructions on how not to misinterpret his intent:

contigeris nostros, Caesar, si forte libellos,
 terrarum dominum pone supercilium.
 consuevere iocos uestri quoque ferre triumphi,
 materiam dictis nec pudet esse ducem.

⁷⁵ By the end of the Flavian principate, the number of Christians empire-wide was, according to Hopkins (1999) 84, 'considerably fewer than 10,000' out of a population of roughly sixty million (see above, n. 58). Primarily ex-Jews rather than ex-pagans, Christians were unlikely at this time, despite later revisionist histories, to have included many members of the Roman elite.

⁷⁶ Vespasian had sought confirmation of his principate in the Serapeum at Alexandria (Suet. *Vesp.* 7.1; Tac. *Hist.* 4.82), and both he and Titus (probably) spent all night in the Temple of Isis and Serapis at Rome before the great Jewish triumph of 71 CE (Joseph. *Bj* 7.123). Vespasian's orientation to Egyptian religion was also reflected in his installing of a statue of the river god Nile in his Temple of Peace (Plin. *HN* 36.58). Domitian, too, lavished attention on Isis and Serapis, and is given the title 'Beloved of Isis' on the obelisk in his stadium (Levick [1999] 189). On Christianity (less than widely embraced by the Roman elite), see above, n. 75.

⁷⁷ Worship of the current emperor had always been tolerated and even encouraged in the east. But *Flauiiales* or priests of the cult of Vespasian are now attested for Gallia Narbonensis, Baetica and Africa: Liebeschuetz (2000) 986. And, closer to Rome, Pompeii boasted a *flamen* of Vespasian, the *flamen Caesaris Augusti* (CIL 4.1180).

qua Thymelem spectas derisoremque Latinum,
 illa fronte precor carmina nostra legas.
 innocuos censura potest permittere lusus:
 lasciua est nobis pagina, uita proba.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 1.4)

If you happen, Caesar, to touch my booklets,
 Lay aside the frown that rules the earth.
 Even your triumphs have allowed for jesting,
 Generals feel no shame at their abuse.
 Please read my poems in the very way you watch
 Thymele and the joking Latinus.
 Censorship can allow innocuous games:
 My page is wanton, my life virtuous.

In Flavian Rome, as the preface to *Epigrams* I makes clear, the ‘malicious interpreter’ (*malignus interpres*) made the writing of epigrams, with its *lasciua ueritas*, *lusus* and *licentia*, necessarily a self-guarding activity. Even Pliny’s preface to the *Naturalis Historia* shows a similarly self-protective anxiety, as he clearly envisions that ‘his worthiness as a member of the equestrian order with close connections to the *princeps* and his sons’ is being evaluated by the other members of the literate elite about to read his text.⁷⁸ But what Pliny and Martial also reveal, as of course does Statius, is the other side to this. Within the pyramidal structure of Roman society the writer himself had power, and his words and texts became part of the circulation of favour and power that defined the operation of upper class Roman society. Martial indeed, as Barbara Gold underscores,⁷⁹ was ‘highly aware’ not only of the ‘larger issues surrounding patronage, poetry and power’ but of his own place in Flavian Rome’s ‘gift-exchange culture’.⁸⁰ Martial is explicit about what he offers:

quem chartis famaеque damus populisque loquendum?
 quis Stygios non uolt totus adire lacus?

(Martial, *Epigrams* 5.25.5–6)

Whom do we give to paper, fame and world renown?
 Who’s reluctant to vanish in Stygian lakes?

⁷⁸ See Sinclair, p. 292.

⁷⁹ Gold, pp. 591–612.

⁸⁰ Gold, p. 612.

And similarly explicit about the failure to recognise the reciprocity involved:

laudatus nostro quidam, Faustine, libello
dissimulat, quasi nil debeat: imposuit.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 5.36)

A man I praised, Faustinus, in my little book
Pretends he owes me nothing: he's a cheat.

Literary patronage was not only a necessary form of control and appropriation, but was index too of a writer's social force. *Amicitia* between writer and patron from the time of Ennius onwards had always been a relationship of mutual self-interest, even if writers such as Virgil and Lucan decided against naive panegyric of their patron. But under Domitian this relationship was more than ever to the fore, and, though Domitian's introduction of two new literary festivals was, like the similar festivals of Nero, in part indebted to the emperor's own literary interests (Domitian had, after all, been tutored by Statius' father, a poet and successful performer on the festival circuit),⁸¹ its spur was appropriation and control, and its success owed much to the rewards anticipated by victorious poets. The annual *Iuuenalia* in honour of Minerva at Domitian's Alban estate (Suet. *Dom.* 4.4; Cass. Dio 67.1.2) were crudely political. Despite the fusion of 'Italian' *uentiones* (animal hunts) and gladiatorial bouts, stage shows (*ludi scaenici*), and 'Greek' poetic and oratorical competitions, the apparent predominance in the last-mentioned of imperial panegyric produced, in Alex Hardie's words, 'a festival focussed as much on Domitian as on his protecting goddess'.⁸² The quinquennial *Capitolia* (Suet. *Dom.* 4.4), on the other hand, which survived into late antiquity as one of the great literary, musical and gymnastic festivals, were more complex and nuanced in their effect. They boasted oratorical and poetic competitions in Greek and Latin, along with music, singing, chariot-racing, athletics and gymnastics. Overtly 'Greek' in structure and content, their purpose seems in part to have been to impose some imperial, central control over the festival circuit itself, which as Hardie points out, 'had by this time saturated civic, cultural and religious

⁸¹ For Domitian's literary interests, see Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.91; Suet. *Dom.* 2.2; Tac. *Hist.* 4.86.

⁸² Hardie, p. 142.

life in the eastern provinces'.⁸³ At Athens, Thespiae, Aphrodisias and elsewhere festivals of the Muses abounded, featuring dramatic, musical and athletic competitions.⁸⁴ The east had also produced the false Neros, and it was the area in which Flavian support had been strongest and which the emperor would neglect at his peril. Rome was the capital of the Greek world. The *Capitolia* served to bring the Greek east into its capital; and, because of the connection between the Capitol and the Flavian dynasty, it also served to parade the power and legitimacy of the third Flavian *princeps*.

But if literary activity was an area where power was negotiated, so, too, most obviously, was sexual activity. The standard sexual ideology of the upper class Roman male was one of dominator/dominated, penetrator/penetrated in which the upper class Roman male dominated/penetrated his sexual partner (male or female) and asserted his social and sexual superiority. It is a constrained and constraining vision. Again Martial's epigrams exemplify.⁸⁵ Although they exhibit the standard Roman assumption that almost all males are bisexual, the epigrams show no such tolerance of bisexual behaviour in women (lesbianism being portrayed as a monstrous form of female adultery: *Epigr.* 1.90), and have severe restrictions on both the heterosexual and the homosexual behaviour befitting the mature Roman citizen. Penetration is an index of social status, and consequently, while active pederasty is presented as appropriate behaviour, pathic homosexuality—anal or oral—is portrayed as unseemly; so too is male prostitution. Oral sex in fact, whether fellatio or cunnilingus, active or passive, is consistently attacked by Martial (e.g., *Epigr.* 1.77). Other targets include circumcision, infibulation (11.75), castration (which is associated with sexual depravity: 6.2), and even masturbation (9.41). There is approval of female prostitutes and loose women of the lower classes, and admiration for devoted widows, exemplary matrons, and pretty young slave girls, who present no threat to the poet's masculinity and sense of social position. But we witness a blanket disapproval of anything which looks like female sexual power (and the personal liberty and control which that implies). Thus the love-enslavement ideology of Augustan elegy is anathema to Martial, and

⁸³ Hardie, p. 127.

⁸⁴ On the continuing vitality of Greek drama in the east of the empire, see Jones (1993) 39–52.

⁸⁵ On the sexual ideology of Martial's epigrams, see Sullivan (1991) 185–210.

even the sodomising of women other than prostitutes is generally to be rejected (11.43, 12.96, but not 11.104)—as a female usurpation of an exclusively male privilege (*illud puerile*, ‘the boy’s thing’, as Martial calls it, *Epigr.* 9.67.3) and a violation of the social/sexual boundaries essential to the poet’s world. Those boundaries were the product of a rigid sexual/social ideology based upon gender and class, which had not only defined Roman upper class culture for centuries but entirely accorded with legislation of Domitian designed to ensure that ideology’s uniform instantiation.

For Domitian’s revival of the *Lex Iulia de Adulteriis Coercendis* (of 18 BCE) and the *Lex Voconia* (of 169 BCE) were especially aimed at the restriction of upper class Roman women. Roman women were in essence breeding machines. They generally married in their early teens, and remarried, if still of childbearing age, when divorced or widowed. ‘Rome had no spinster class.’⁸⁶ Women’s sexual practices were constantly regulated in the empire, and the Flavian principates were among the most regulatory. Vespasian had targeted lower class female sexual behaviour in his re-enactment of the Claudian *senatus consultum* of 52 CE, which reduced to *ancilla*-(slave-)status any woman who co-habited with a slave (Suet. *Vesp.* 11); while Domitian’s revived Augustan adultery law aimed at the Roman elite. Already encouraged by the *ius trium liberorum* (‘The Right of Three Children’), which gave a fast-track career path to their husbands and some tax-exemption, upper class Roman *matronae* now also had legal coercion to keep them chaste in their breeding place. The revival of the *Lex Voconia* (Suet. *Dom.* 8.3; Plin. *Pan.* 42.1), on the other hand, was designed to curtail women’s inheritance rights. The power which Roman law accorded to women in the area of property rights (in which remarkably their rights were almost the same as men’s) was clearly felt to be threatening. By far the most common marriage in the empire was *sine manu*, in which the wife did not enter the authority of the husband but remained in the *familia* of her father and under his *potestas*. She retained ownership of the dotal property, which had to be returned to her in the event of divorce, and of any non-dotol property which she inherited and of which she had the right to dispose. The inheritance laws left many elite women with substantial fortunes, the right to dispose of them, and power within the

⁸⁶ Frier (2000) 799.

Roman household independent of their husbands. The *matrona* of an upper class Roman household, who already derived power within the household from her responsibility for the children's upbringing,⁸⁷ found her power substantially increased through the inheritance of property; while childless propertied women, who attracted the same attention from legacy-hunters as men, publicly displayed their moneyed power and status.

Tacitus mentions Calvia Crispinilla, a survivor of the Neronian court who lived under the Flavians, as *mox potens pecunia et orbitate* ('later powerful through her money and childlessness', *Hist.* 1.73); the younger Pliny names Ummidia Quadratilla as a woman of similar wealth and power, who left her large estate to her grandchildren and little to her *adulatores* (*Ep.* 7.24). Such women regularly had *clientes*, as of course did Roman empresses, princesses, and the wives and daughters of high-ranking officials, whose power was often substantial. Vespasian's concubine, Caenis, is reported by Cassius Dio as 'sometimes selling governorships, sometimes procuratorships, generalships, priesthoods . . .' (τοῖς μὲν ἀρχὰς τοῖς δὲ ἐπιτροπείας στρατείας ἱερωσύνας . . . πιπράσκουσα, 65.14.3); while Titus' daughter, Iulia, prevented Domitian from executing the ex-prefect of Egypt, Iulius Ursus, and even obtained a consulship for him in 84 CE (Cass. Dio 67.4.2). But power of this latter kind was both rare and derivative, and did little to disguise the reality of women's general social and civic impotence. And even propertied *matronae* found that the norms and imperatives of Roman upper class culture militated against insubordination to their husbands.⁸⁸ Public life was the source of status and power, and women were effectively barred from it. Privately and publicly women were less valued than men. They were banished, except for the Vestals, to the back row of theatrical seating along with gladiators and *decoctores* or insolvent debtors and behind freedmen and the *pullati* or dirty poor;⁸⁹ they were grouped with *infames* or shameful persons such as pimps, prostitutes, actors, gladiators and their trainers, and pathic homosexuals, in being excluded

⁸⁷ The classic case was the mother of Agricola, Iulia Procilla, who was responsible for putting socially elitist brakes on her son's early enthusiasm for philosophy: Tac. *Agr.* 4.2–3.

⁸⁸ Saller (2000) 859–61.

⁸⁹ Again imperial women were an exception, at least in the Colosseum, where they would have sat with the emperor in the imperial box.

from the right to represent third parties in the praetor's court.⁹⁰ They were also more likely to be exposed as children, that is, left to die or, more probably, to be enslaved. Ironically, among the lower classes women seem to have been (relatively) more highly valued, since there they found opportunities to earn status through work, in shopkeeping, for example, textiles, crafts, and, occasionally, trade. Freedwomen especially seem to have earned local status in this way, sometimes even functioning as jewellers, goldsmiths, ironsmiths, and tailors.⁹¹ They also achieved fame as *mimae* ('mime-actresses'), who, like gladiators, belonged to a group despised by the upper class and legislated against, but who often achieved superstar status.⁹² Indeed, as the empire went on, there was even a shift in female evaluation among the upper class caused by low reproductivity. As the chances of whole families dying out increased for lack of a male heir, daughters began to become important as 'continuators of the family line'.⁹³ Even a multitude of male heirs became a problem. In the absence of primogeniture too many male offspring could plunge a family into poverty. Daughters began to be reared for specifically economic reasons: they offered a cheap way of securing advantageous alliances with other families.

It is clear that unacceptable female power was a constant concern of the Flavian male elite, as it was of Martial, in whose poems we seem to witness attempted renegotiations of power in the sexual activities meriting his disapproval. Ironically one of the prime inversions of the social pyramid occurs in an area of sexual activity in which the vulnerability of the poet is repeatedly displayed: slave pederasty. The poet's susceptibility to beautiful boy-slaves and catamites is displayed in many epigrams (e.g., *Epigr.* 1.58; 4.42; 5.83; 8.56; 8.73; 11.43; 12.75)⁹⁴ despite the ability of the *delicatus* or 'favourite' to invert the power-relations of the household. Indeed this inverted power-relationship is sometimes reflected half-seriously in a transference of title:

⁹⁰ See Edwards (1993) 123–6; Shaw (2000) 388–403.

⁹¹ See the excellent study of Joshel (1992) 141–2.

⁹² E.g., the *mima* Thymeles, mentioned by Martial as receiving the tolerant gaze of Domitian at Mart. *Epigr.* 1.4.5.

⁹³ Saller (2000) 872.

⁹⁴ See Sullivan (1991) 207–11.

cum uoco te dominum, noli tibi, Cinna, placere:
saepe etiam seruuum sic resaluto tuum.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 5.57; cf. 11.70)

When I call you 'master', don't be pleased, Cinna:
I also often greet your slave-boy thus.

Earinus, Domitian's own catamite, on whom several epigrams focus (*Epigr.* 9.11–13, 16–17, 36), is but the extreme case of power-inversion. The *delicatus*, like the poet who immortalised him, always had something to offer in the Roman round of favour and power.

Not that a slave-boy and a Roman free-born pre-pubertal male could be confused. Both were *pueri* but, whereas the former would never lose his 'puerile' status, the latter was a *uir*-in-waiting and unavailable for 'pedication'. There had to be, and were, clear visual distinctions between them, which occasionally can be observed in surviving artefacts. John Pollini's study⁹⁵ of the visual representation of slave-boys focuses on the sexually serving, long-haired, pampered *delicati*, whose androgynous beauty made them desirable sex-objects and whose masters were sufficiently devoted to them as to commission expensive portraits. The overtly girlish appearance of the *delicati*, manifested especially in their feminised hairstyles, draws a cultural line between them and free-born Roman boys. Their significant role in religious ministry, as sacrificial attendants, complemented their service at the dinner-table, and fused their master's religious and sexual passions. Unsurprisingly, they held a high place in the *paedagogia* or 'slave schools' of the wealthy and the emperor himself. For the pathic masters, who went against the grain of upper class Roman culture, there was also the mature slave 'stud' or *draucus*, an example of whom may be represented in a misidentified marble portrait in the New York Metropolitan Museum.⁹⁶ What Pollini's chapter underlines is that in sexual relations between slave and free the social markers of Flavian Rome affirmed a clear structure of dominator and dominated, which in practice, as in other areas, allowed for intricate negotiations of power between those so designated. The old structures remained, and were as clear and as porous as ever.

⁹⁵ Pollini, pp. 149–66.

⁹⁶ Figs 7–10.

3. *Marmoreal Power*

barbara pyramidum sileat miracula Memphis,
 Assyrius iactet nec Babylona labor;
 nec Triuiæ templo molles laudentur Iones,
 dissimulet Delon cornibus ara frequens;
 aere nec uacuo pendentia Mausolea
 laudibus immodicis Cares in astra ferant.
 omnis Caesareo cedit labor Amphitheatro,
 unum pro cunctis fama loquetur opus.

(Martial, *De Spectaculis* 1)

No words from barbarous Memphis on wondrous pyramids,
 No boasts about Assyrian Babylon's toil;
 No exalting the spineless Ionians' shrine to Trivia,
 Ignore Delos' altar of many horns;
 No sending starward with Caria's boundless praise
 That Mausoleum poised in vacant air;
 All endeavour yields to Caesar's Amphitheatre,
 Fame will bruit one work in place of all.

To modern spectators of Rome the most obvious change which the Flavians brought about was the remonumentalising of the city itself. Everywhere the modern visitor goes (s)he confronts Flavian monuments right in the urban centre. The Palatine, the Capitol, the Quirinal, the Forum Romanum, the Forum of Caesar were monumentalised or remonumentalised with Flavian edifices. Two new imperial fora were created (and a third envisaged) and imposing adjacent structures built: the Baths of Titus, the Temple of the Divine Claudius, the Flavian Amphitheatre or Colosseum.⁹⁷ To the modern visitor the centre of Rome parades itself as essentially a Flavian city. The Flavian building program was, in part, dictated by necessity. The fire of 64 CE had devastated ten of the city's fourteen Augustan districts, and, although rebuilding was going on apace, much of this was for Nero's own delectation (the Domus Aurea) and much was directed to the provision of urgently needed housing. Of the public monuments destroyed by the fire only the Macellum and Circus Maximus had been fully rebuilt. The city's two wooden amphitheatres, for example, which had perished in the disaster, were unrestored. None of

⁹⁷ The building's more famous name, 'Colosseum', is first attested in Bede, *Patr. Lat.* 94.543.

this was helped by the urban destruction accompanying the final fighting in Rome itself (especially on and around the Capitol) between the Vitellian and Flavian forces, as a result of which Rome's oldest and most hallowed temple, that of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, was burnt to the ground (*facinus . . . luctuosissimum foedissimumque*, 'a most lamentable and foul crime', according to Tac. *Hist.* 3.72). The temple was rebuilt by Vespasian (*Hist.* 4.53), only to be burnt to the ground again in another disastrous fire in 80 CE and again rebuilt by a Flavian.

The Flavians, however, did not simply rebuild; they rebuilt innovatively, grandiosely, and semiotically. Unsurprisingly, for the Flavians were supremely conscious of the semiotics of place. John Henderson's analysis⁹⁸ of Domitian's appropriation of the Roman Forum through sculptural possession (the emperor locates prominently within it a massive equestrian statue of himself) underscores the Flavian attention to meaning and location: in Statius' phrase the site and the statue, the 'work', match, *par operi sedes* (*Silv.* 1.1.22), that is, join to create meanings.⁹⁹ The Augustan model was instructive. The Flavian emperors manipulated meaning, as Augustus did, by changing and controlling place. A new architecture and iconography meant not only a new Rome but a new *romanitas*, one in which 'Romanness' was a subject relationship to the Flavian emperor, who was everywhere immanent in the city through buildings and repetitious iconography. Even the buildings which Domitian restored (and here he seems to have differed from Vespasian: Cass. Dio 66.10.1a) were appropriated with no record of their earlier builder(s) (Suet. *Dom.* 5.1).

James Packer's description and interpretation¹⁰⁰ of the most prominent Flavian structures attends to this issue of Flavian immanence and the ideology the structures embodied and projected. The dismemberment of the Domus Aurea indicated what the Flavians were not. The Colosseum, the Temple of Peace, the Baths of Titus, the Temple to the Divine Vespasian, the Temple to the Divine Claudius, the Temple of the Gens Flavia, the Arch of Titus, the restoration of the Tabularium, of the Augustan Pantheon and of the Temple of Honos and Virtus, the double restoration of the Temple of Capi-

⁹⁸ Henderson, pp. 238–39.

⁹⁹ The statue was clearly important to Domitian's later self-imaging, since it is found depicted on *sestertii* of 95/96 CE: see Hannestad (1986) fig. 89; *BMC* 2.406.

¹⁰⁰ Packer, pp. 167–98.

toline Jupiter (the second by Domitian with pentelic marble, gilded embellishments and elaborate sculpture: see Plut. *Publ.* 15.3–4), the Domitianic Stadium and Odeum, the Porticus Divorum with its shrines of Vespasian and Titus, the Fora Transitoria adjoined more or less to the great fora of Augustus and of Caesar, and, most especially, the Palace of Domitian, built by Rabirius on the Palatine which it dominated and from which it dominated Rome—indicated what the Flavians were, or rather what they wished to be seen as being. Sometimes subtly, sometimes not, hallowed Roman places were appropriated to promote legitimising Flavian values: the restitution of social order and the establishment of the Flavian peace (echoes here of the paradigmatic Pax Augusta); Flavian *pietas*, *beneficentia*, *providentia*; imperial power, splendour, wisdom, triumph, divinity: the basis of the Flavian right to rule—political, social, military and divine. In the imperial palace the Aula Regia, notes Packer,¹⁰¹ accented Domitian's 'connections with the gods'. It made the implied divinity of the Cancellaria Reliefs and Domitian's numismatic concourse with the gods unambiguous.¹⁰²

Nor was Flavian building restricted to the capital. Military forts and encampments rose everywhere, and new or refurbished fora and/or *Capitolia* are evidenced in Brixia, Londinium and Verulamium, and new amphitheatres at Pozzuoli and Verona in Italy, and at Avenches, Arles and Nîmes in Gaul. Palaces, theatres and temples were erected, restored or expanded in Hispania, Britain, and elsewhere, and in Greece and Asia Minor a variety of Flavian public buildings, including imperial cult shrines, city gates, porticos, stadiums and baths, are attested. Ephesus experienced a complete Flavian overhaul, including a large dynastic temple. Near Rome itself, Ostia witnessed a substantial rebuilding of its urban centre, and Domitian built his famous villa in the Alban hills.¹⁰³ Later writers inevitably criticised the Flavian building program as excessive. The contemporary jibe of *arci* = 'arches' and (in Greek) 'enough' (Suet. *Dom.* 13.3) is echoed in Plutarch's evaluation of Domitian's 'disease' (*νόσος*, *Publ.* 15.5) of building and in Martial's dismissive post-Domitianic description, *superbi regis delicias grauesque luxus* ('the delights and oppressive luxuries of a haughty monarch', *Epigr.* 12.15.4–5). What is so

¹⁰¹ Packer, p. 198.

¹⁰² See above, n. 66.

¹⁰³ See Colledge (2000) 968, 971.

difficult to read in the Flavian building program apart from large-scale, overt political ideas is the semiotic disturbance it produced in the reading of Rome itself. An ideologically satisfying aspect of the Augustan building program was its sense of culmination and closure: in the Augustan Forum and the Ara Pacis, as elsewhere, Roman history, religion and myth reached its divinely determined *telos*. Despite its allusions to the first principate, Flavian Rome seemed adjacent to that tradition: set apart, unrooted, arbitrary, multiplicatory, ersory, replaceable.

It also seemed, and was, invasive. For there was more to Flavian architecture than the control of urban meaning through spectacle and display. What was at issue was the control of urban space and the bodies within it. David Fredrick's chapter¹⁰⁴ examines the relation between the Domitianic building program (especially such exemplars as the Iovis Cenatio of the Domitianic palace, the 'mirrored portico' described by Suetonius [*Dom.* 14.4], the 'black triclinium' described by Cassius Dio [67.9], the equestrian statue in the Roman Forum, and the Forum Transitorium) and 'imperial encroachment on the elite male body'.¹⁰⁵ The reflowering of *delatores*, 'informers', and treason-trials in Domitian's principate is a *topos* of the *damnatio* writing which followed; as is the controlling gaze of the emperor himself:

praecipua sub Domitiano miseriarum pars erat uidere et aspici, cum suspiria nostra subscribentur, cum denotandis tot hominum palloribus sufficeret saeuus ille uultus et rubor, quo se contra pudorem muniebat.
(Tacitus, *Agricola* 45.2)

The chief part of our misery under Domitian was to see and be seen, when our sighs were noted down, when that savage gaze and flush were enough to detect the pallor of so many—the flush which fortified him from shame.

Fredrick sees the eye of the emperor immanent in the materiality of the new city. Taking his cue from Foucault's idea of surveillance as a spatial practice, he argues that Domitian's control of architectural space was (more obviously than in the Augustan period) a control of male body-space, a realisation of the emperor's 'ability to invade

¹⁰⁴ Fredrick, pp. 199–227.

¹⁰⁵ Fredrick, p. 201.

the supposedly impenetrable elite male body through surveillance and violence',¹⁰⁶ and a displayed, constitutive aspect of imperial power. Again the equestrian statue in the Roman Forum, described by Statius, is paradigm: this time of the emperor's all-seeing, overtly penetrative gaze. 'Overtly' is important. Surveillance was practised in the Augustan period covertly and with attention to preserving the fiction of the 'impenetrable' republican body. 'To the extent that the enormous encroachment of Flavian building on the space of the city reflects the encroachment of imperial surveillance into the social and emotional space of the elite', writes Fredrick, 'a different way of seeing and being has come into existence, which affects both the scale and plan of major Flavian constructions, and their smaller details'.¹⁰⁷ Fredrick's concluding analysis of the Arachne frieze of Domitian's forum presents it as in part an image of the imperial control of writing and of bodies, most especially those of the elite Roman male. What is worth adding to Fredrick's analysis is that Domitian's iconography of scribal control in the Forum Transitorium derives force and meaning, like the rest of Flavian art, from location: in this case from location at the heart of the Roman book industry. As Martial tells us (*Epigr.* 1.2.7–8; 3.1–2), at the end of the Argiletum in the Forum Transitorium itself were the shops of Rome's major booksellers.

We are aided in the interpretation of the Arachne frieze by its certain location, as we are in the analysis of most of the main Flavian buildings. But little Flavian sculpture can be surely placed. The sculptural panels of the Arch of Titus and the colossal basalt statues of Hercules and Bacchus from the Aula Regia are among those which can. But the imperial sacrificial relief in the Louvre (on which Domitian [?] is shown sacrificing before the altars of Vespasian and Titus), and the so-called 'Trophies of Marius', perhaps celebrating Domitian's German campaigns, cannot easily be placed. The famous Cancellaria Reliefs are similarly unplaced. As indeed are the portrait busts of the Flavians which survived Domitian's *damnatio*.¹⁰⁸ John Henderson, who offers a detailed locational reading of the panels of the Arch of Titus,¹⁰⁹ alerts the reader to the difficulties of reading the Cancellaria

¹⁰⁶ Fredrick, p. 201.

¹⁰⁷ Fredrick, p. 214.

¹⁰⁸ Excepting, of course, the bust of the apotheosised Titus carried to heaven by Jupiter's eagle on the vault of his own Arch.

¹⁰⁹ Henderson, pp. 235–44 and figs 25, 43–5.

Reliefs, which, though 'context-deprived commemorations', 'still contrive to immortalise the Flavians as dynasty'.¹¹⁰ His commentary on these energetic panels (which show no signs of weathering and were perhaps abandoned after being recut) hypothesises their location (or intended location) as facing panels of a triumphal arch.

The portrait busts of the Flavian emperors can and, of course, do come from almost anywhere. As Cassius Dio remarks of Domitian: καὶ τοσαῦτα αὐτῷ ἐψηφίσθη ὥστε πᾶσαν ὀλίγου δεῖν τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν ὑπ' αὐτὸν οὖσαν εἰκόνων αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνδριάντων καὶ ἀργυρῶν καὶ χρυσῶν ἐμπλησθῆναι ('He was voted so many honours of this kind that virtually the whole world under his rule was filled with his likenesses and statues made of silver and gold', 67.8.1). But what *can* be seen in these unlocated portrait busts is the semiotics of style. The Flavian dynasty's move from the more cautious military commander, Vespasian, conscious of the fate of Nero and cognisant of the political strategies underlying the Augustan principate, to the divine autocrat, Domitian, is mirrored in the movement from the neo-veristic, rugged, man-of-the-people style of the more popular form of Vespasian's portraiture (balding head, furrowed brow, lined neck, closely set eyes with crow's feet, hooked nose, creased cheeks and jutting chin),¹¹¹ through the kindly beneficence of the curly-haired, square-headed representations of Titus,¹¹² into the smooth-skinned arrogance of those of Domitian, whose mid-principate portrait in the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome depicts him with a high forehead, protruding upper lip, soft, full cheeks, aquiline nose and stylised hair. Domitian's hair (or wig)¹¹³ in fact is more suggestive of Nero than of either Vespasian or Titus, and may have been intended to suggest intimations of 'such "divinised" rulers as Alexander the Great'.¹¹⁴ There is a striking contrast, too, between Vespasian's matter-

¹¹⁰ Henderson, p. 247.

¹¹¹ See, for example, the Ostian portrait of Vespasian: Kleiner (1992) Fig. 140.

¹¹² See especially the Vatican sculpture of Titus as a magistrate: Kleiner (1992) Fig. 143.

¹¹³ Suetonius (*Dom.* 18.1) claims that in later life Domitian was bald. Juvenal calls him *calvus Nero* ('bald Nero', *Sat.* 4.38).

¹¹⁴ See Kleiner (1992) Fig. 145; Hekler (1912) Fig. 220b; Colledge (2000) 969. Hannestad (1986) 137 notes the presence of 'more august features and locky hair' in the numismatic representations of Domitian after his accession. As the c. 75 CE Labicum statue of Domitian with a 'Neronian tiara' hairstyle shows (Kleiner [1992] Fig. 144), Domitian fairly early on 'rejected the Flavian male hairstyle in favor of one of late Julio-Claudian date' (Kleiner [1992] 176). The younger Pliny's 'portrait' of Domitian fits the Palazzo dei Conservatori sculpture (almost) perfectly: *superbia*

of-fact senatorial image and the refined looks and high-piled coiffures of Flavian imperial women. Elite Romans could find domestic peace and power in the *tablina* and dining-rooms of their atrium-houses, adorned with the theatrical, polychromatic, figural and architectural designs of their fourth-style paintings. But outside that domestic space the rules of theatricality and the control of space were in the hands of others. Marmoreal power was essentially the control of space and behaviour. And, if on the macro-scale the controlling agent was a monumental Flavian structure or large sculptural relief or statue, in smaller, especially enclosed public areas, it was often the gaze of a portrait bust.

4. *Imperial Knowledge*

iam te magnanimus dignatur noscere Caesar,
Itala iam studio discit memoratque iuuentus.

(Statius, *Thebaid* 12.814–15)

Already magnanimous Caesar deigns to know you,
Already Italy's youth hotly learn and recite you.

καίτοι τούς γε τυράννους, οἷς ἀνάγκη πάντα γινώσκειν, ἐπαχθεστάτους
ποιεῖ τὸ τῶν λεγομένων ὥτων καὶ προσαγωγέων γένος.

(Plutarch, *De Curiositate* 522F)

Tyrants, for whom there is a necessity to know everything, are made into objects of hate by the tribe of so-called 'Ears' and 'Agents'.

Imperial portrait busts were instruments of control. So, too, imperial knowledge. Most obviously the knowledge that comes from surveillance and from the practice of legal denunciation and informing known as *delatio*. The prejudicial accounts of Pliny, Tacitus, Juvenal, Suetonius, Cassius Dio and others nominate the court of Domitian as, in its final years, defined by imperial paranoia, a reign of terror (*strages*, Tac. *Agr.* 45.1), a plethora of unjustified treason trials, executions and property confiscations amid a cowering citizenry harassed by informers:

in fronte, ira in oculis, femineus pallor in corpore, in ore impudentia multo rubore suffusa ('arrogance in his brow, anger in his eyes, womanly pallor on his flesh, and in his face shamelessness swamped by a great flush', *Pan.* 48.4). But, as Levick (1999) 209 unsurprisingly comments, 'what a modern observer sees . . . will be in part a creation of the observer'.

dedimus profecto grande patientiae documentum: et sicut uetus aetas uidit quid ultimum in libertate esset, ita nos quid in seruitute, adempto per inquisitiones etiam loquendi audiendique commercio.

(Tacitus, *Agricola* 2.3)

Assuredly we have provided substantial proof of our submissiveness. And as the former age witnessed the extreme in liberty, so we that in servitude, since even the exchange of speech and hearing had been removed by espionage.

bona uiuorum ac mortuorum usquequaque quolibet et accusatore et crimine corripiebantur. satis erat obici quaecumque factum dictumue aduersus maiestatem principis.

(Suetonius, *Domitianus* 12.1)

The property of the living and the dead was seized everywhere on any accusation from any accuser. It was enough to allege any deed or word against the majesty of the emperor.

And the ancient sources supply the names of the most prominent Domitianic *delatores*: Mettius Carus, Publicius Certus, Catullus Messalinus, and the infamous Aquilius Regulus, who also practised *delatio* under Nero (see esp. Plin. *Ep.* 1.5; 4.7.4–5; 4.22.5–6; 7.27.14; 9.13). Much of this might seem to smack of exaggeration, if not self-serving history. *Delatores* had been a feature of imperial Rome since the inception of the empire when crimes of *maiestas* became crimes against the emperor, and had flourished notoriously under Nero. Indeed before Vespasian reached Rome there were moves in the senate to prosecute such prominent Neronian *delatores* as Publius Egnatius Celer, Aquilius Regulus (above) and Eprius Marcellus, but the declaration of an amnesty aborted them (Tac. *Hist.* 4.40–4). Titus is recorded as being positively punitive towards *delatores* and their instigators, and as legislating to restrict their activity (Suet. *Tit.* 5; Cass. Dio 66.19.1–3); but this shows that, in the reign of the second Flavian *princeps*, *delatores* were still part of the imperial scene. Suetonius (*Dom.* 9.3; 10.1) records that Domitian began by curtailing *delatio* aimed at enriching the *fiscus*, but did not maintain his restrictions. It is clear, however, as even the revisionist historian Brian Jones has to concede, that a difference in the scale of delatorial activity is apparent for the Domitianic principate, especially its later period, in which a considerable number of Rome's senatorial elite, including the twelve ex-consuls named by Suetonius (*Dom.* 10.2–4; 11.1; 15.1), perished in

a welter of prosecutions.¹¹⁵ It was not without foundation that Pliny defined Domitian as ‘that robber and executioner of all the best men’ (*ille optimi cuiusque spoliator et carnifex*, *Pan.* 90.5). The general and coherent picture of Domitianic oppression to be found in Pliny, Tacitus, Suetonius and Juvenal, is not simply to be dismissed as ‘Trajanic or Hadrianic propaganda’.¹¹⁶

However, the relationship between power and knowledge in the Flavian principate was more subtle and wide-ranging than the political control emanating from the acquisition of ‘intelligence’. What can be discerned from the writings of the Flavian period and of the principates which immediately ensued is that, in a strong conceptual sense, imperial control and imperial knowledge, *imperium* and *scientia*, were coextensive. The world was thoroughly known and Roman; indeed known because it was Roman. And what lay outside that world was neither Roman nor knowledge. Rhiannon Evans’ exploration¹¹⁷ of the discourse of Flavian empire underscores the strong conceptual relationship between mapping, conquest, knowledge and imperialism. It is not accidental that the mapping of the whole Roman world began with the republican *imperator* who made Roman *imperium* and his own identical: Iulius Caesar. Caesar’s project, like many others, was left to his adopted son to complete, and it was brought to finality under Augustus by Agrippa, who placed the global map in his own Porticus Vipsania. Evans regards it as likely that Vespasian, whose Temple of Peace later contained the Severan map of Rome known as the Forma Urbis, placed an earlier version of the city plan there together with an updated version of the Agrippan map of the Roman *orbis*.¹¹⁸ Roman mapping enacted Roman *imperium*; it was a form of epistemological invasion and appropriation. Certainly to the Flavian mind invading a territory and acquiring knowledge of it were the same. And it was in the Flavian principate that the remotest of lands, Britain, often identified with the land beyond all lands, *ultima* or *ignota Thule* (*Sil. Pun.* 3.597), became fully conquered

¹¹⁵ Jones (1992) 180–92. Cassius Dio (67.11.2–3) regards the number of those executed by Domitian as impossible to tell.

¹¹⁶ Wilson, p. 532.

¹¹⁷ Evans, pp. 255–76.

¹¹⁸ *Orbis terrarum urbi spectandus* (‘The world as spectacle for the city’) is Pliny’s apt description of the map (*HN* 3.17).

and thus known. Evans exhibits Tacitus' *Agricola* as a major document of Flavian imperialism in which the conquest/invasion/penetration of Britain and imperial knowledge are identical, and this imperial knowledge is used to imperialise, to co-opt local elites and convert them into Roman Britons—a process subject to contrasting evaluations in Tacitus, who famously sets *Agricola*'s beneficent colonisation against Calgacus' withering, reductive critique (*Agr.* 21.1–2; 30.3–4). It is indeed to Tacitus' credit that the price of imperialism is acknowledged; the elder Pliny's Flavian eulogy of Italy's civilising destiny (*HN* 3.39) is revealed as a thin rationalisation of the procedures of imperial conquest.

But if there was a strong connection between knowledge and conquest, there was also one between knowledge and writing. In the early empire knowledge was essentially *scientia scripta*, that which had been written. The elder Pliny's research has been criticised for its lack of empirical research; but, as Trevor Murphy observes, that is to misunderstand Flavian literary and scientific culture: 'the written culture of knowledge (if not knowledge itself) had developed enormously since the investigations of Aristotle and Theophrastus. In Pliny's case, the world-in-text was an obstacle to independent research, and literary tradition excluded an empirical treatment of nature'.¹¹⁹ *Inuenio* ('I find') and *reperio* ('I discover') in the *Naturalis Historia* generally allude to Pliny's literary research; and that research would embrace the writings of poets, kings and princes (the future emperor Titus, Domitian and Licinius Mucianus, author of a collection of *mirabilia*, figure among his sources), as well as of natural philosophers. Pliny's appetite for the written word was voracious; he viewed the researcher's task not as the creation of knowledge, but as the rearrangement of it. And to make clear to the reader the extent of this rearrangement Pliny parades his one hundred or so sources in his work's initial book. The impulse here, as in many of Pliny's so-called 'rhetorical' strategies, is as political as it is authorial. The writer of the *Naturalis Historia* is concerned to repay with interest all the 'facts' which he has borrowed and which he now distributes with traditional Roman munificence to his readership and in a way which, as Patrick Sinclair argues,¹²⁰ serves to confirm appropriate behavioural

¹¹⁹ Murphy, p. 302.

¹²⁰ Sinclair, pp. 278–79.

norms of self-discipline and self-denial in the service of gender, class, ethnicity and state. The interest repaid is, of course, fame—fame which the author simultaneously bestows on the constituents of his subject matter, even as he organises and controls them.

For Pliny's procedures are as imperial as those of Agricola: a labelling and categorising of the world as a means of control and cultural validation. His 'monumental' collection, as Sinclair observes, 'serves and supports the Flavian hierarchy and its dispensation of things'.¹²¹ His encyclopaedic lists resemble at times nothing so much as the images and lists of subject nations and conquered tribes on Rome's triumphal monuments; at the same time they signify the force of production (and Pliny's own writing as an item of production) in the Roman world. Nature to Pliny was productive, spectacular and political; for him the history of an animal includes its first appearance as a spectacle at Rome, categorised and presented to and by the Roman elite. 'Finite and changeless',¹²² nature to Pliny was, as Britain was to Agricola, an area to be penetrated, mapped, labelled, rendered intelligible to 'a single, imperial system of meaning',¹²³ controlled, known, theatrically paraded, made Roman. Knowledge, Rome, empire were not to be separated. The spectacle of Pliny's dedication to Titus embodies the unbreakable triad (*HN praef.* 1).

Moral knowledge, however, was something else. Its sources were diverse, and it was, as ever, controversial. Still present, at least as a paradigm, was the traditional upper class mode of acquiring moral knowledge: through inherited family *exempla*. Elite Romans traditionally preached a type of behavioural cloning, in which the acts and values of ancestors were the model for future practice. Hence Evans' focus, in her account of Tacitus' *Agricola*,¹²⁴ not only on the moral values of the great general—*integritas, abstinentia, moderatio, prudentia*—but on their status as paradigm, the exemplary nature of 'the form and image of his mind' (*formam ac figuram animi, Agr.* 46.1). It was precisely the dearth of such behavioural cloning which writers such as Tacitus and Juvenal placed at the centre of Rome's moral distemper. To them moral progress was an impossibility and the status quo sacrosanct. But there were other paradigms. Some came

¹²¹ Sinclair, p. 285.

¹²² Murphy, p. 309.

¹²³ Murphy, p. 321.

¹²⁴ Evans, pp. 255–76.

from philosophers, the Stoics Musonius and Epictetus, for example, or Demetrius the Cynic or Dio Chrysostom, whose fates in Flavian Rome are discussed below; or from the new breed of 'sophists' or 'anti-sophistic' intellectuals (such as Plutarch) now beginning to crowd the Greek east. Others came from the empire's tax-exempted teachers, the *grammatici* and *rhetoires*, who were specifically instructed by Vespasianic edict to 'educate the young in civilised behaviour and political virtue'.¹²⁵ Still others were derived from non-Roman religions such as Judaism or the newer, more radical Christianity (which Domitian is falsely credited with persecuting),¹²⁶ few from Roman religion itself, which was more a matter of ritual performance than a set of moral prescriptions. Indeed the focus in Roman religion on ritual and the latter's attachment to place made Roman religion unsuitable not only for the provision of moral knowledge but for the imperialist project itself and for the enlarged moral and religious spaces of the Flavian world. What knowledge Roman religion brought, if any, was the *cognitio deorum* ('knowledge of the gods') postulated by Varro (*Ant. Div.* frag. 3), and that knowledge was at best local. As Clifford Ando's analysis shows, because Roman cults constructed their deities as 'materially present in the hallowed places of the capital, 'the imperial city did not impose or export its religion on or to its provinces'.¹²⁷ The only shared deity of the Flavian empire was the emperor himself, whose 'immanence in his ubiquitous portraits made him "the most manifest" of the numinous powers of this world'.¹²⁸ But that 'numinous power' was politico-religious, not moral.

The most controversial, and perhaps most popular paradigm for the Roman upper class arose from the 'new education'. For several generations the rhetorical schools had been producing a form of elite Roman whose moral knowledge was acquired in substantial part through role-play during the course of complex moral and legal argument, and whose view of morality was more probably to be seen less in terms of values and character (whether modelled on the past or otherwise), more in terms of self-imaging conduct: appearing just, compassionate, self-restrained, courageous, loyal and so forth in the

¹²⁵ Found at Pergamum, 75 CE; the tax-exemption was withdrawn by Domitian in 93–94 CE: McCrum and Woodhead (1961) 458 (*FIR* 1.77).

¹²⁶ See the able discussion of Jones (1992) 114–17.

¹²⁷ Ando, p. 330.

¹²⁸ Ando, p. 344.

appropriate circumstances—moral behaviour as theatre.¹²⁹ Successful playing to and before an audience was both the model and the mould, and at the new Domitianic festivals in Rome or at Alba, even if the largest prizes went to the virtuosi *citharoedi* ('cithara players'),¹³⁰ handsome rewards were available for the most successful epideictic displays, and names and careers thereby established. The younger Pliny even writes that the practice now began of hiring applause for one's own speeches (*Ep.* 2.14.9–13; cf. *Quint. Inst. Or.* 10.1.18). Hired clagues, evident in the Roman dramatic tradition from the time of Plautus onwards (*Amph.* 67–85) and notorious in the age of Nero (*Tac. Ann.* 14.15.8; *Suet. Nero* 20.3; *Cass. Dio* 61.20.4), signalled not only theatricality, but its corrupting force. The new world of the Flavians—its new aristocracy, urban structures, plebeian spectacles, its moral complexities and theatricality—was, simply in virtue of its newness, its difference, its complexity, its theatricality, to many necessarily unacceptable. The intense theatricality of the Flavian court, compared by Cassius Dio to 'playacting' (σκηνοποιία, 67.2.6), and its political oppression only augmented for many the unacceptability of this world.

5. *Dissident (S)words*

mox nostrae duxere Heluidium in carcerem manus; nos Maurici Rustique uisus <adfixit>, nos innocenti sanguine Senecio perfudit.

(Tacitus, *Agricola* 45.1)

Soon our hands led Helvidius to prison; Mauricius and Rusticus assaulted our eyes; Senecio covered us in his innocent blood.

That unacceptability manifested itself variously. 'The killing of Vitellius brought an end to war rather than a start to peace', wrote Tacitus (*interfecto Vitellio bellum magis desierat quam pax coeperat*, *Hist.* 4.1.1). The historian was far too generous. War was by no means at an end. Initially, of course, and most notoriously there was opposition to the rule of Rome itself—from foreign foes, and not only from the Jews, whose uprising and its bloody consequences are described in emotive

¹²⁹ On the theatre as behavioural paradigm, see Bartsch (1994) 1–35 *et passim*; Boyle (1997) 112–37.

¹³⁰ See Hardie, p. 128.

detail by the Romanised Josephus. But there were also risings by the Brigantes under Venutius in Britain, where Rome's own troops in the province were difficult to control; and problems with the Dacians and Sarmatians on the Danube, resolved at least momentarily, by successful engagements on the parts of Mucianus and Rubrius Gallus, respectively. There were disturbances too in Cyrenaica, Mauretania, and Africa, those in Africa involving imminent rebellion among the legions. As troops there and in Britain showed, not all opposition was external. The most important rebellion, however—in progress even as Vespasian acceded to the throne—was that of the army of the Rhine, under the leadership of Iulius Civilis, Iulius Classicus, Iulius Tutor, Valentinus and Iulius Sabinus. The purpose of the rebellion is disputed, but it seems likely to have been an attempt to create a confederation of German and Gallic tribes, a separate 'Gallic empire'. Vespasian not only acted quickly in crushing these rebels through the agency of Q. Petillius Cerialis (70 CE), but he implemented a strategy of military discharge, dispersement and relocation to reduce the possibility of future insurrections, and he increased the number of legions on the Danube from four to six.¹³¹ To prevent problems from arising among the praetorian guard (known for its ability to make and unmake emperors), he reduced its size (from Vitellius' sixteen cohorts perhaps to nine) and appointed his relative Arrecinus Clemens as commander in 70 CE, and later his son Titus.¹³² It should be noted that Titus used the praetorian commander's office ruthlessly (Suet. *Tit.* 6.1). Indeed the execution of Caecina Alienus and the condemnation and enforced suicide of Eprius Marcellus in 79 CE on conspiracy charges (described by Cassius Dio [65.16.3–4]; see Suet. *Tit.* 6.2) may have had little to do with an attempted assassination attempt on Vespasian or on his sons, but may rather have been motivated by Titus' desire to get rid of these advisers to his father.¹³³ At any rate Suetonius concludes his biog-

¹³¹ On the military problems of Vespasian's initial years, see Levick (1999) 107–23. For a culturally revealing story associated with the Civilis rebellion, see Plutarch's account in *Amatorius* (*Amat.* 770C–771C) of the 'heroic' love shown for Sabinus by his wife Empona, and her fearless contempt for Vespasian as she faced the death he had decreed.

¹³² He may also have appointed the ex-prefect of Egypt, Tiberius Iulius Alexander, as praetorian prefect after Clemens and before Titus, perhaps to serve jointly with each: see Griffin (2000) 9–10.

¹³³ So, plausibly, Levick (1999) 193–5.

raphy of Vespasian with an intriguing reference to 'continuous conspiracies against him' (*assiduas in se coniurationes*, *Vesp.* 25.1).

The principates of the sons were certainly not devoid of conspiracies against their lives. Titus experienced an apparently half-hearted conspiracy of two patricians aspiring to the throne (Suet. *Tit.* 9.1–2), and, if rumour and Suetonius are to be believed (Suet. *Tit.* 9.3, *Dom.* 2.3), rather more serious plotting from his brother. Domitian faced at least two serious attempts on his life (in 87 and 96 CE), the final one successful and mounted by his courtiers and his wife (Suet. *Dom.* 14.1).¹³⁴ Domitian also experienced, despite his generous treatment of the army (including an increase in pay and privileges), in the middle of his principate (89 CE) a major insurrection against him in Upper Germany, led by the governor of the province, Lucius Antonius Saturninus (Cass. Dio 67.11.1–2). It was quickly suppressed by the commander of Lower Germany, Aulus Bucius Lappius Maximus, assisted by the future emperor Trajan.¹³⁵ Most of the dissident swords, however, in Domitian's reign were those of the tribes in Britain, Germany, Pannonia, Dacia, Africa, sporadically accepting and unaccepting of Roman rule. It was the kind of dissidence Domitian longed for, since it gave him the opportunity to win the military glory denied him by his father and brother. He went on campaign four times himself (three times in the 80s and finally in 92 CE), received twenty-three imperial salutations, and celebrated several (perhaps four) triumphs in Rome itself.¹³⁶

There was also the opposition of political dissension and of words. Senatorial resistance was a discontinuous constant, and not remotely restricted to the provocative biographies of Thræsea Paetus and Helvidius Priscus (by Arulenus Rusticus and Herennius Senecio, respectively), which perished along with their authors in the early 90s (Tac. *Agr.* 2.1, 45.1; Suet. *Dom.* 10.3; Cass. Dio 67.13.2; see also Plut. *De Curios.* 522D–E). There was also the ongoing and often overt

¹³⁴ For the 87 CE conspiracy see the sacrifices offered by the Arval Brethren: McCrum and Woodhead (1961) 14 (*CIL* 6.2065).

¹³⁵ On which see Plin. *Pan.* 14.2–5.

¹³⁶ For Tacitus' incisive mockery of Domitian's first triumph over the Germans in the autumn of 83 CE (when Domitian took the name of 'Germanicus'), see *Agr.* 39.2. Frontinus, who had a different agenda from Tacitus, uses Domitian's campaigns in Germany as paradigms of military strategy (*Strat.* 1.1.8, 3.10; 2.3.23), contending that Domitian 'earned the name of Germanicus' (*cognomen Germanici meruit*, *Strat.* 2.11.7).

criticism emanating from the philosophers. Both Suetonius and Tacitus (see *Hist.* 1.50) underscore the *clementia* of Vespasian, in a way that might suggest that the execution of the philosopher Helvidius Priscus was an exception. This son-in-law of the Neronian Stoic martyr, Thrasea Paetus, who is represented by Cassius Dio (65.12.2) as given to rabble-rousing tirades against 'monarchy' and in support of 'democracy',¹³⁷ was arrested by the tribunes and executed (possibly on the order of Titus, as Mellor suggests).¹³⁸ Helvidius Priscus' execution took place *c.* 74 CE, and was the culmination of events that began before Vespasian's arrival in Rome (Tac. *Hist.* 4.4–9).

But, though Priscus was a most particular case, the relationship between Flavian *princeps* and Flavian philosopher was nothing if not traumatic. As John Penwill's chapter shows,¹³⁹ the political criticism inherent in the philosophical schools and practices of early imperial Rome generally had one of two consequences: banishment, or histrionic and self-consuming martyrdom, 'buying fame with easy blood' (*facili redemit qui sanguine famam*, Mart. *Epigr.* 1.8.5). The Stoics especially were an ideological threat, not to the theory of the principate but to its flawed actuality, as Nero had realised when he banished Helvidius Priscus, Musonius Rufus and others. And, despite the disadvantage of following Neronian precedent, Vespasian wasted little time. One of his early acts as *princeps* (in 71 or 72 CE), perhaps prompted by Mucianus, was to banish philosophers (Cass. Dio 66.13.2), just as he had also banished astrologers (Cass. Dio 66.9.2). Even Musonius, initially exempted from more general banishment decrees (perhaps because he had previously been banished by Nero), proved too critical to be tolerated by Vespasian: his writings on kingship and philosophy, sexual morality, and building extravagance seemed aimed at the first Flavian *princeps*. Musonius later followed the others into exile, leaving the emperor a monopoly of *sapientia* (see Tac. *Dial.* 41.4).

¹³⁷ Griffin (2000) 43–5 sees the testimony as distorted (so too Levick [1999] 89), and argues that Helvidius' own behaviour (he was *praetor* in 70 CE) shows that he was not opposed to the principate as such, but that his objective was a principate controlled and advised by the senate.

¹³⁸ Mellor, p. 81. The hypothesis of Titus' order would certainly accord with Suetonius' account of Vespasian's failed attempt to stop the execution (*Vesp.* 15). Griffin (2000) 44–5 suggests that there was little love lost between Helvidius and Titus, whose position and behaviour the Stoic would have found especially objectionable.

¹³⁹ Penwill, pp. 345–68.

An intensification of Vespasian's policy is to be seen in the reign of Domitian, under whom Dio Chrysostom (*Or.* 13.4, 10), Epictetus, Euphrates and Artemidorus were all banished. Cassius Dio paints a predictably bleak and exaggerated picture: ἄλλοι τε ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς ταύτης τῆς κατὰ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν αἰτίας συχνοὶ διώλοντο, καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ πάντες ἐξηλάθησαν αὐθις ἐκ τῆς Ῥώμης ('A great number of others died on the charge of philosophising and the ones remaining were again expelled from Rome', 67.13.3). Penwill, however, argues¹⁴⁰ that philosophising as such was never a crime under Domitian, whose execution of the younger Helvidius Priscus, Herennius Senecio and Arulenus Rusticus was for their politically subversive writings and behaviour, not for their practice of philosophy, which had in any case become marginalised by the mainstream of Roman culture. The fate of Dio Chrysostom seems to support Penwill's position. A court intellectual during the first two Flavians and friend of 'someone very close to the powerful' (traditionally identified as Flavius Sabinus, Titus' son-in-law, but there are other candidates), he was banished by Domitian precisely because of his 'intimacy and kinship' with his (now executed) great friend (*Or.* 13.1). His early speeches show no hostility towards Rome, and in *Κατὰ τῶν φιλοσόφων* ('Against the Philosophers') he apparently supported Vespasian's ban. But after his own banishment by Domitian he claims to have 'converted' to Cynicism and to have spoken openly against the 'tyrant', the δαίμων πονηρός or 'evil demon' (*Or.* 3.13; 13.11–13; 45.1), though some not unreasonably have suspected posturing or exaggeration.

The Flavian expulsion of philosophers and astrologers was part of a pattern of such expulsions going back to the second century BCE, when Rome began the practice of throwing out undesirable aliens. The 'scapegoating' of the foreign intellectual had a long history at Rome, but what especially distinguishes the Flavian expulsions is their occurrence at a time of great intellectual energy in the Greek east, to which they are in a way a culturally reactionary response. The Greek east of the Flavian period was witnessing the beginnings of what today is called 'the second sophistic', a phrase applied by Philostratus to a style of oratory (*V S* 481)¹⁴¹ but used by modern scholars to embrace Greek intellectual energies of the two hundred

¹⁴⁰ Penwill, pp. 360–61.

¹⁴¹ First exemplified, according to Philostratus, by the fourth century BCE Athenian orator, Aeschines.

years from *c.* 50 to *c.* 250 CE. The main figures of this early period included not only 'sophists', public teachers of rhetoric who delivered their speeches (often but not always epideictic fantasies) before live audiences in the great cities of the east (Corinth, Ephesus, Pergamum, Smyrna, Antioch, Athens), but poets (still also often regarded as 'educators') writing in a variety of genres: Scopelianus of Clazomenae, for example, wrote an epic, *Gigantias*, under Domitian (Philos. *Vit. Soph.* 518), while Rufinus, whose erotic epigrams permeate book 5 of the *Anthologia Palatina*, was also writing in the second half of the first century CE.¹⁴² There was no shortage, too, of dramatists, rhapsodes and citharodes for the various poetry and music competitions, the μουσικοὶ ἀγῶνες, which still accompanied the great festivals of the Greek world, and which Domitian endeavoured to reproduce at Alba and Rome (Suet. *Dom.* 4.4).

Opposed to the sophists and contemptuous of them were 'philosophers' such as the Academic Plutarch, who lectured in Rome during the principate of Domitian (*De Curios.* 522D–E) but confined himself chiefly to written texts, some of which may be dated to the Flavian period. Plutarch, who seems later to have enjoyed cordial relations with both Trajan and Hadrian, is essentially sympathetic to Rome, though not to the Flavian dynasty. His remarks in *Amatorius* on Vespasian's execution of the wife of the Gallic rebel Iulius Sabinus are marked by no ambiguity: ἀποκτείνει μὲν οὖν αὐτὴν ὁ Καῖσαρ· ἀποκτείνας δὲ δίδωσι δίκην, ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ τοῦ γένους παντὸς ἄρδην ἀναιρεθέντος ('Caesar killed her. But he paid the penalty for killing her when his whole family was obliterated in a short space of time', *Amat.* 771C). Plutarch was destined to have a large impact on our conception of the imperial world after Domitian. His engagement with the past, as Phiroze Vasunia argues,¹⁴³ provides insight into the concern of Greek intellectuals of this period to forge a distinctive cultural identity in a world colonised by Rome. Vasunia observes in Plutarch's return to the past a conception of ancient Greece as a 'holistic cultural entity' and notes a disjunctive relationship in Plutarch's idea of 'Greekness' between 'purity of origin' and 'contemporary time'. He suggests that a new cultural identity was constructed by Plutarch precisely out of this disjunction, 'born in the tension between

¹⁴² He seems to have been either late Neronian or early Flavian. Cameron (1993) 69 sees him as one of the epigrammatists influencing Martial.

¹⁴³ Vasunia, pp. 369–89.

the pedagogic imperative to recover the past and the engagement with contemporaneity'.¹⁴⁴ Certainly Plutarch's memorialisation of the past was always framed by an unforgetting consciousness of the reality of Roman hegemony.

But the intellectual paradigm to which Rome was primarily drawn and which accorded with that culture's conservative impulse had more in common with the sophists whom Plutarch rejected. As the imperially salaried Quintilian's monumental work underscores, the moral, intellectual and political ideal of at least some members of the Roman elite was not the philosopher, but the *orator*, the *uir bonus dicendi peritus* (*Inst.* 12.1.1), the statesman or great citizen with the ability to speak in the senate and law courts, skilled in administration and the law, the 'truly wise man' (*uere sapiens*), upright and honourable, the servant of the *res publica*—at the furthest possible remove from a philosopher (*Inst.* 1 *praef.* 10, 18; 11.1.35; 12.2.6). Such a paradigm, of course, was Ciceronian and to many scholars anachronistic,¹⁴⁵ and its advocacy of eloquence as a moral force was far from illustrated by the professional Roman *rhetoires* who declaimed for entertainment before audiences and were a prominent feature of elite Roman society in the principates of the Julio-Claudians (see the elder Seneca's *Controuersiae* and *Suasoriae*). Ironically, declamation for entertainment seems to have declined at Rome even as the trend towards sophistic rhetoric increased in the Greek east.¹⁴⁶ In practice what the focus on rhetoric had produced in Flavian Rome was the cult of *delatores*, and a code of conduct based on self-imaging and self-advancing role-play. But, as other critics have observed, Quintilian seems fully aware of the distance between his ideal and contemporary Rome (*nondum est perfectus orator*, 'the perfect orator has not yet been found', *Inst.* 12.10.2), and his *Romanus sapiens* (12.2.7) is a patriotic model for aspiration, based upon the great figures of the past (Fabricius, Curius, Regulus, Decius, 12.2.30; Hortensius, the Luculli, Sulpicius, Cicero, Caesar, both Catos, 12.7.4) and the traditional Roman values they exemplified, set up in direct opposition to the competing paradigm of the Greek philosopher. It is intended not as a description of Flavian practice but as an *exemplar* for instruction, exhortation and

¹⁴⁴ Vasunia, p. 384.

¹⁴⁵ See, e.g., Winterbottom (1964) 97; Kennedy (1969) 138.

¹⁴⁶ See Bowie (2000) 919–21.

persuasion.¹⁴⁷ Even intellectuals such as Tacitus, whose *Dialogus de Oratoribus* argues the death of oratory, shared the anti-philosophy bias of Quintilian's ideal. Despite the cries of outrage displayed by later historians, the imperial banishment of philosophers seems to have reflected a general perception in Rome of their social utility.

But if philosophers were banished, poets were welcomed, and the Flavian period is often praised for its revitalisation of Roman literary and artistic energies. Poetry especially flourished, and was encouraged, institutionalised and controlled through the creation of new competitions and festivals. Three important Latin epic figures emerged, Statius, Valerius Flaccus, Silius Italicus, and the Latin language's finest epigrammatist, Martial. The Flavian poets as a whole were, until recently, often misdescribed as imperial bootlickers. Exemption has always been given to the (intentionally) politically sensitive dramas of Curiatius Maternus, author of *tragoediae* (*Medea* and *Thyestes*) and *praetextae* (*Domitius* and *Cato*), whose *Cato* is recorded by Tacitus as having offended Vespasian, while *Thyestes*, on which he is described as working, is said to be a more overt imperial critique (*Dial.* 2–3). Possibly this Maternus is the sophist mentioned by Cassius Dio (67.12.5) as executed by Domitian in 91 CE.¹⁴⁸ Other drama, however, is more frequently ignored than commented upon: most notably, the pseudo-Senecan *Octavia*, probably written and performed during the early years of the principate of Vespasian, whose hostility to Nero was combined with honorific attention to Claudius and whose social program involved restitutive patronage of Roman theatre (Suet. *Vesp.* 19.1). This extraordinary *praetexta*, Joseph Smith argues, in effect enacts 'a popular mandate for justified revolution, figure-headed in Octavia',¹⁴⁹ and implicitly hymns the glories of the present (Vespasianic?) regime through its indictment of what it has replaced. But it does so at the dual cost of metaphoric interplay between Neronian and Flavian *imperium* (not accidentally the play's thematics of fear, hypocrisy, power and the control of speech are pre-eminently transferable), and potent criticism of the Roman people's lack of political will. 'We should do well', writes Smith, 'to read *Octavia* not simply as an account of the crisis in the history of the Julio-Claudian dynasty . . . but as a reflection of a later socio-historic climate, a dis-

¹⁴⁷ See the astute discussion of Habinek (1988) 192–202.

¹⁴⁸ See Syme (1958) 111.

¹⁴⁹ Smith, p. 426.

tinctively Flavian climate . . . which caused the playwright to look back and to mythologise'.¹⁵⁰

But drama was only one dimension—and its least popular—of imperial theatrical production. The Roman stage under the Flavians was dominated by mime and pantomime, and, while the latter gave rise to superstars such as Paris who had an affair with Domitian's wife, Domitia, and exercised considerable influence at court,¹⁵¹ the former not only regularly burlesqued such central Roman institutions as paternal *auctoritas* and marriage in a sexually explicit manner, but was also capable of producing the kind of political satire which might lead to its author's death. The younger Helvidius Priscus is reported by Suetonius as having been executed by Domitian for a mime on (Trojan) Paris and Oenone, which resonated too closely of (Flavian) Paris and Domitia (*Dom.* 10.3). Paris himself was executed in due course, and received from Martial a gentle epitaph in the safety of Nerva's Rome (*Epigr.* 11.13). Unsurprisingly, Domitian attempted to curb the theatre and restrict performances to private houses (Suet. *Dom.* 7.1).

But criticism of Domitian did not emanate only from the theatre. Both epic poetry and its antithesis, epigram, are filled with what Quintilian would term *emphatic* criticism, that is to say, criticism expressed through the rhetorical figure known as *emphasis*. Developing the seminal work of Frederick Ahl,¹⁵² Hannah Fearnley discusses¹⁵³ the relevant passages from the *Institutio* (9.2.64–5), in which *emphasis* is defined as layered speech, one that employs hidden or latent meaning, where 'something hidden is dug up from something said' (*ex aliquo dicto latens aliquid eruitur*) and 'as it were has to be found by the hearer' (*auditori quasi inueniendum*). The process of interpreting *emphatic* speech was, as Fearnley points out (again with reference to the *Institutio*), immanent in Roman reading practice, in which the paradigm for Quintilian and Martial, as in part for Ovid (*Tr.* 5.1.1), was the *studiosus lector*, the knowing, attentive, supportive reader.¹⁵⁴ *Emphasis* is

¹⁵⁰ Smith, p. 396.

¹⁵¹ Satirised by Juv. *Sat.* 7.87–92.

¹⁵² Especially Ahl (1984b) 174–208.

¹⁵³ Fearnley, pp. 615–16.

¹⁵⁴ How many of such readers the poet could count upon is notoriously difficult to estimate. As Woolf (2000) 875 observes, 'very few of the inhabitants of the Roman empire were able to read even the simplest document'. Furthermore, few of those who could read, say, a Latin inscription (as opposed to one written in Aramaic,

described by Quintilian as the 'most popular' (*frequentissimum*) of figures, and the form of speech to be employed before a tyrant where 'it is unsafe to speak openly' (*dicere palam parum tutum est*, *Inst.* 9.2.66).¹⁵⁵ For the Flavian poets there was no dearth of *emphatic* writing to imitate: for Martial, Ovid's exile poetry; for Statius, Valerius and Silius, Lucan's *De Bello Civili*. One of the paradoxes of the principate was that it was the institution which ended civil war and the institution which mimicked civil war. Lucan presented this brilliantly in *De Bello Civili* through a process of *emphatic* criticism which at times (e.g., in the proem to book 1) was not *emphatic* enough. Rome's powerful elite were sophisticated readers, 'attuned', as Steve Mason observes,¹⁵⁶ to figural exploitation. Hence Domitian's execution of the younger Helvidius Priscus and of Hermogenes of Tarsus, the latter precisely 'on account of certain "figures" in his history' (*propter quasdam in historia figuras*, Suet. *Dom.* 10.1). The critical placement of Rome in the Flavian epicists and Martial models itself on the *emphatic* criticism of Lucan and Ovid but avoids their non-*emphatic* overttness and Lucan's political agenda. Accepting the reality of domination, Flavian poets focus on its exposure.

Statius' *Thebaid*, for example, rewrites Greek myth and Virgilian epic to participate directly in the discourse of civil war (*fraternas acies*, 'battle-lines of brothers', *Theb.* 1.1) and imperial power (*sceptrum exi-*

Syriac, Hebrew, Egyptian Demotic, Neo-Punic, Celtic or whatever) had the necessary literary and cultural competence, the *doctrina*, to read/hear something as complex and allusive as a Roman epic or Statius' *Silvae*. The potential readership/audience for Statius' *Silvae* and *Thebaid* would be restricted not simply to Rome's elite—members of the senatorial and equestrian classes, their families, educated freedmen—and to non-Roman intellectuals and educated/educating slaves, but to those among such who had undergone the *studia* or *paideia* necessary for approaching such poetry. Rome's elite, however, it should be noted, though concentrated in the capital, were also widely spread. Roman poetry was clearly read in the main cities of the empire as well as in Rome. Bookshops and libraries were to be found in the cities of both the western and eastern parts of the empire and, of course, in Egypt, from where a large quantity of literary papyri has been recovered. Pliny's works could be purchased in Lyons (*Ep.* 9.11). One concrete thought: does the capacity of Domitian's Odeum (5,000–7,000 people) signal the size of the *potential* readership/audience for Statius in Rome itself (approximately 0.5% of the urban population)? Certainly the testimony of Juv. *Sat.* 7.82–7 seems to indicate sizeable audiences for recitations of *Thebaid*. The issue of Roman literacy is widely discussed: see especially Harris (1989), Woolf (2000) 875–97, and the chapters in Humphrey (1991), and Bowman and Woolf (1994).

¹⁵⁵ Quintilian should know; tutor to Domitian's great-nephews and heirs, he knew the circles of power (*Inst.* 4 *praef.* 2; Auson. *Grat. Act.* 31).

¹⁵⁶ Mason, p. 560.

tiale, 'death-bringing sceptre', *Theb.* 1.34), and to fashion itself as an indictment of both, and of the military ethos and values that generate them.¹⁵⁷ The second half of the poem devotes itself entirely to civil war in a way not designed to comfort. The world represented is one marked by malevolence, injustice, blood, death, suffering, and the naked lust for power—power defined as the ability to inflict death. Human limitation and pain are underscored, so too the ever widening spiral of causality that transforms bystander into victim and innocent observers into active participants in the body-dissections of war. Two things stand out: the abuse of imperial power and the inability of men to resist the impulse to kill. Roman values topple in the process, especially the Augustan and Flavian imperial values: *Virtus*, *Clementia*, *Iustitia*, *Pietas*.¹⁵⁸ In Statius' great epic *Virtus* is a form of Death (see *Theb.* 10.628–787), the search for *Iustitia* (*Theb.* 2.360) mass murder, the final killing fields *Clementia*'s tribute (*Theb.* 12.481–796). But what happens to *Pietas* is simply extraordinary. This foundational value of the Augustan and Flavian principates is transformed by the whole narrative of *Thebaid* 12 into a female value, inverted and perverted in men. The transformation is both poetically and culturally revolutionary. For *Thebaid* is a work which climaxes in, and is thus sealed by, feminine values, which undercut the ethos of epic and its narrative of male heroism.¹⁵⁹

A theatrical work for a theatrical age, *Thebaid* yet fashions an image of its own poet-reciter's impotence. This too, despite abundant testimony of the number and contextual variety of Statius' public recitations—and, where the epic-hating Juvenal is concerned, of their success:

curritur ad uocem iucundam et carmen amicae
Thebaidos, laetam cum fecit Statius urbem

¹⁵⁷ Some of the following comments on the Flavian epicists derive in part from my essays in Boyle and Sullivan (1991) 217–21 (Statius), 270–7 (Valerius Flaccus), 294–304 (Silius Italicus).

¹⁵⁸ For Augustus, see esp. *RG* 34.2; for the Flavians, note that *Virtus*, *Iustitia* and *Pietas* function as motifs on their coinage: e.g., *RIC* 2.354–5 ('Vesp.'), 73, 96 ('Titus'), 214, 246, 305a, 387b ('Dom. '); McCrum and Woodhead (1961) 92, 99 (*BMC* 2.75, 246 no. 138). Among the shrines which Vespasian restored was the Temple of Honos and Virtus (Plin. *HN* 35.120). Some (e.g., Hannestad [1986] 136) also identify the divine figure 'pushing' Domitian to war in frieze A (the 'profectio scene': figs 46, 50) of the Cancellaria Reliefs as *Virtus*. For Vespasian's *Clementia* and Domitian's lack of it or perversion of it, see Suet. *Vesp.* 12.1; *Dom.* 10.1, 11.2.

¹⁵⁹ See the important article of Dietrich (1999) 40–53.

promisitque diem: tanta dulcedine captos
 adficit ille animos tantaque libidine uolgi
 auditur.

(Juvenal, *Satire* 7.82–5)

They run to the delightful sound and song of girlfriend
Thebaid, when Statius has made the city happy
 And promised it a date: such sweetness he uses
 To enrapture souls and such desire he arouses
 In the crowd's ears.

Donka Markus' study¹⁶⁰ of programmatic statements in the epic interprets the epicist's paradoxical pose of engaged, divinely possessed, self-effacing performer as an attempt to carve out a poetic identity within the realities of imperial power. Unlike Valerius Flaccus, who invokes Apollo and Vespasian as his sources of inspiration (*Arg.* 1.5–21), Statius does not allow Domitian to share with the Pierian Muse any inspirational role; indeed even the opening imperial eulogy is designed, according to Markus, to be detachable. Statius is decidedly 'not writing at the emperor's bidding'.¹⁶¹ Pierian fire and madness, *calor* and *furor*, protect and free the poet; and, like the madness of a Sibyl or a Pythia, they guarantee the truth. But they fail to give the poem autonomous power. The poem's dialogue with the epic tradition, its invitation to its projected audience to forget, its focus on failed poet-figures and on the obdurate nature of its rhetorical addressees, are concerned, so Markus argues, like the poet's self-suppressing style, to stifle the commemorative force of epic and to refashion its ideology into one of lamentation and impotence. The demarginalisation of the female voice in the final book reflects the changed ideology and its projected failure.

The other Flavian epicists also deliver ambiguous commemorations. Dedicated to the dead/divine Vespasian, Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica* yet offers a substantial critique of Flavian Rome. *Thebaid* makes civil war its central issue; *Argonautica* incorporates civil war into its narrative but places it within the framework of a myth of the birth of technology and the growth of civilisation. And not just any myth: for from Catullus through to the younger Seneca the Argonautic myth had functioned in the Roman tradition as matrix for a nega-

¹⁶⁰ Markus, pp. 431–67.

¹⁶¹ Markus, p. 435.

tive critique of the development of civilisation. Mannered, neoclassical, richly allusive (the opening four lines alone rewrite Lucan, Catullus and Seneca), the poem pervasively 'Romanises' the myth through thematic emphasis and narrative innovation. The first half of the poem (books 1–4) focuses on power, war, civil dissension and the psychology of their operation. The second half sharpens the focus on civil war and on tyranny (represented especially by the Colchian king, Aeetes, who himself acknowledges the universal allurement of power: *Arg.* 5.536). Book 6 is entirely devoted to a piece of narrative invention: the civil war between Aeetes and his brother Perses, the background to which is provided in book 5. This concern with 'brotherly discord' (*fraterna Erinys*, *Arg.* 4.617) replays the *fraternas acies* of Statius, and joins with the exploration of its relationship to tyranny not simply to reinforce the Roman semiotics of the poem, but to display its cultural anxiety. This cultural anxiety seems also reflected in the poem's early, programmatic treatment of the relationship between ruler and aristocrat. For Pelias' hostility towards Jason's *fama* and *virtus* (*Arg.* 1.30; cf. Tac. *Agr.* 41 of Domitian's hostility), Jason's contemplated 'Roman' responses (*Arg.* 1.71–3), and the failure of the *patres* to act seem to embody the essence of contemporary aristocratic frustration and subservience.¹⁶² Indeed a prime theme of the poem seems to be precisely autocracy's (logically and empirically) necessary attempt to curtail aristocratic status and power. Motifs of dissimulation, political suicide, resistance, Stoic 'opposition', fear, subservience, civil war, and the ubiquity of tyranny encode the narrative for the Flavian reader.

The third Flavian epicist to resist the generic, commemorative force of epic, Silius Italicus, did so, ironically, by returning to the early Roman epicists, Naevius and Ennius, in whom that force was both prescriptive and overt. But in epicising history rather than encoding it in a mythological saga, he was following, too, the example of Lucan. And the insistent dialogue between Silius' *Punica* and both *De Bello Civili* and Virgil's *Aeneid*, made conspicuous by Silius' choice of a period and course of events 'historically' intermediate between those addressed by his two great predecessors, creates of the three poems an epic trilogy on the history of Rome—from its mythic foundation (*Aeneid*), through its republican zenith (*Punica*), to

¹⁶² See Zissos, pp. 670–72.

Rome's dismemberment by Caesar (*De Bello Civili*). Virgilianising in style and mode (Silius' literal 'veneration' of Virgil is attested by the younger Pliny, *Ep.* 3.7), the poem both commemorates Roman *uir-tus* and problematises its own commemoration, by exploiting the ambivalences of Rome's triumph over Hannibal. *Punica*'s moral structure is complex and nuanced. But its overall effect is to highlight the courage, nobility, self-sacrifice, compassion and endurance of Rome in defeat, and to intimate the self-seeking ambition (see, e.g., the speech of Scipio Africanus at *Pun.* 16.695–7), betrayal, and vicious brutality (contrast Claudius Nero at *Pun.* 15.813ff. with Hannibal at *Pun.* 15.381ff.) which victory begins to promote. Monumental defeat at Cannae is represented as the acme of Roman greatness:

haec tum Roma fuit; post te cui uertere mores
si stabat fatis, potius, Carthago, maneres.

(Silius Italicus, *Punica* 10.657–8)

This was Rome then; if, after your fall, Rome's morality
Was doomed to turn, I wish, Carthage, you still stood.

To Silius the victory at Zama transformed the city into an imperial power, and began the moral and political decline which culminated in the death of the republic, the birth of the principate and the destruction of values essential to Roman greatness.

Ironically some of the values traditionally regarded as defining constituents of *Romanitas* are displayed in the first major episode of *Punica* not at the centre of Rome's empire, but, as in Tacitus' *Annales* and *Agricola* (see below), at the empire's periphery. William Dominik's analysis¹⁶³ of the fall of Saguntum in *Punica* 1 and 2 exhibits Saguntum as a surrogate Rome and the citizens' instantiation of the virtues of *fides* and *pietas* as futile and fatal. Dominik's programmatic reading of the episode shows the seeds of Rome's post-Cannae decline already evident, as the *fides* and *pietas* displayed by the surrogate Rome are rewarded with Roman betrayal and the city's destruction. *Punica*'s ideological world is the melancholic verdict of one of the imperial world's great survivors and unexplained suicides. Having experienced the reigns of Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero (whose fall he had witnessed as consul in 68 CE), Silius had supported Vitellius in the bloody upheaval of 69 CE, and had not only survived but had

¹⁶³ Dominik, pp. 469–97.

prospered under the Flavians only to commit suicide through starvation under Trajan (101 CE). His poem's implied commentary on Rome of the Flavian principate is not especially flattering.

Also unflattering, as well as flattering, in fact 'layered', at times overtly paradoxical, are Statius' anxiety-reflecting *Silvae*, whose opening poem is analysed for its visual theory by John Henderson.¹⁶⁴ The main thrust of *Silvae* 1.1 is satirical—designed to show, among other things, how the size of the equestrian statue of Domitian reflects the lies of the implied self-imaging. Ahl remarked in his detailed analysis of the poem almost two decades ago: 'What is, ultimately, so preposterous about Domitian's equestrian statue is that it is a blatant artistic misrepresentation of the emperor as a military man, greater than Caesar or Alexander because his statue is bigger'.¹⁶⁵ Similarly, even the jubilantly clausal poem, *Silvae* 1.6, destabilises. As Carole Newlands demonstrates,¹⁶⁶ although Statius' representation of the Saturnalian festivities seems to confirm political stability and the emperor's divinely sanctioned rule, the spectacle of rapid change and the Jovian ideology of the poem reflect upon the vagaries and unpredictability of the exercise of imperial power. Especially telling is the 'resignification' of this archaic, carnivalesque festival of Roman liberty as 'the emperor's *Saturnalia*', one which reaffirms rather than subverts his status as *dominus* (*Silv.* 1.6.83), and thus challenges, according to Newlands, 'the very notion of popular liberty that the festival traditionally promoted'.¹⁶⁷

Whole processes of imperialism are similarly subject to criticism. Rhiannon Evans' analysis¹⁶⁸ of *Silvae* 5.2 and the post-Domitianic *Agricola* of Tacitus focuses on how the remote province of Britain functions not simply as a *locus* of exploration, conquest, glory, and imperial validation, but as a discursive space for evaluating Flavian imperialism and its informing processes of colonisation, and for investigating the moral ambiguities of Roman order. Tacitus' own representation is inevitably the less opaque. His use of Britain, according

¹⁶⁴ Henderson, pp. 238–39.

¹⁶⁵ Ahl (1984b) 100. The huge concrete base of the statue (11.8 m. × 5.9 m.), discovered in 1902 (Richardson [1992] 144–5), indicates the colossal size of the structure and of Domitian's military claims. For the statue's numismatic representation, see above, n. 99.

¹⁶⁶ Newlands, pp. 499–522.

¹⁶⁷ Newlands, p. 505.

¹⁶⁸ Evans, pp. 255–76.

to Evans, 'spells out Flavian Rome as a steadily-spiralling-downwards world, where *libertas* slides easily into *licentia*, and slavery appears to be the only alternative to chaos and anarchy'.¹⁶⁹

Tacitus is less opaque than Statius, because he is writing after the Flavian period. But that 'afterness' has itself proved problematic. Several recent historians have treated the testimony of the Roman writers who broke their silence *after* Domitian's death with profound scepticism, categorising the political representations of Tacitus, Suetonius, Juvenal and the younger Pliny as distorted, unreliable accommodations to the post-Domitianic settlement, literary replays of the senate's *damnatio memoriae*. Marcus Wilson's chapter¹⁷⁰ takes issue with this new revisionist history of the Flavian, especially Domitianic, principate, accusing it of generic confusion, textual misreading and a serious underestimation of the reliability of our main literary sources, which cannot be reduced to 'Trajanic or Hadrianic propaganda'.¹⁷¹ Tacitus' main audience is 'neither the Emperor nor his own senatorial colleagues' but 'posterity' (*posteritas*). Especially important in Wilson's view is the Tacitean representation of Stoic dissidence, which, despite influential studies to the contrary,¹⁷² not only 'makes sense' but seems an all but inevitable consequence of the role of *exempla* in Roman Stoic practice.

Not all Flavian historians wrote after the assassination of Domitian. We are fortunate in possessing one major historian who was not only intimately associated with the Flavian court but wrote throughout the Flavian principate, the Jewish aristocrat and priest, Yosef ben Mattathياهو, imprisoned and released by Vespasian and Titus, the latter of whom he assisted in the capture of Jerusalem. Returning to Rome with the victorious Titus, he was given a pension and Roman citizenship, taking the name Titus Flavius Josephus. The importance to the cultural historian of the writings of this 'self-proclaimed insider/outsider, privy to the behind-the-scenes talk of the new imperial house itself, but writing in a language not his own and from a quite different cultural and religious perspective'¹⁷³ would

¹⁶⁹ Evans, p. 276.

¹⁷⁰ Wilson, pp. 523–42.

¹⁷¹ Wilson's main targets are: Waters (1964) 49–77; Ramage (1989) 640–707; Jones (1992); Southern (1997).

¹⁷² Wilson cites especially the work of Brunt (1975) 7–35 and Shaw (1985) 16–54.

¹⁷³ Beard, p. 543.

seem self-evident. But, as Mary Beard points out,¹⁷⁴ Josephus has been largely ignored by Classicists and treated with scant understanding by Judaic scholars. Beard investigates the disciplinary policing, intellectual prejudice and period bias responsible for Josephus' bizarre treatment in the academy, and offers an ideological reading of the *Bellum Judaicum* account of the Flavian triumph of 71 CE, focussing on its theatricality as well as its imperial ideology. She sees Josephus' account as close to an 'official version' of the Flavian accession, in which the triumph of 71 is presented not only as a model of Roman imperialism, its plenitude, profusion, even its naturalness, but as the first and defining icon of the new imperial dynasty, as the new dynasty's 'inaugural moment'. In the process Rome is restored as king-maker, the inseparability of emperor and military conquest asserted, and the curtain finally brought down on Julio-Claudian history.

Steve Mason takes a different tack. His revisionist chapter¹⁷⁵ attacks the common picture of Josephus as Flavian lackey. The account of Judaeae history in Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaicae*, it is argued, which owes more to the Roman historiographical tradition than is commonly realised, aims pervasively not only at 'rounded psychological analysis' and the pronouncement of moral lessons, but at the structuring of an essentially non-Roman narrative to focus on 'issues of governance . . . constantly on the minds of elite men in the capital'.¹⁷⁶ Published in Rome in 93–94 CE, the *Antiquitates* invites contemporary Roman readers to assess the Judaeae constitution and by implication their own. Josephus' account of the Judaeae constitution is no simple ethnic eulogy, but an evaluation designed to underscore the 'Roman' virtues and values embodied in the constitution but absent from the court of Domitian, even as it promotes senatorial aristocracy as the 'noblest' form of government. Mason observes in Josephus an 'anti-monarchical bias', apparent in his focus on Judaeae and Roman 'tyrants' alike in *Bellum Judaicum* and the *Antiquitates*. The *Antiquitates*' lengthy description of the Roman constitutional crisis of 37–41 CE accents the victimisation of the senate by the 'tyrants', Tiberius and Gaius, in a way which replays the work's preceding treatment of the 'tyrannical' Herod and points not too obscurely to late Domitianic Rome—or perhaps to imperial Rome itself. For at

¹⁷⁴ Beard, pp. 543–58.

¹⁷⁵ Mason, pp. 559–89.

¹⁷⁶ Mason, p. 574.

times, Mason argues,¹⁷⁷ Josephus seems to regard the principate as itself a form of tyranny (*AJ* 19.187, 230), having 'profound authorial investment' in Sentius' explicit condemnation (during the great senate debate of 41 CE: *AJ* 19.167–84) of all Caesar's successors.

At least one major author survives who wrote both during and after the Flavian principate: Martial.¹⁷⁸ Hannah Fearnley's investigation of Martial focuses not only on the political nature of his writing during the Flavian period, but also on the changes that writing undergoes as the Flavian period ends and the 'new light' of the Trajanic principate begins.¹⁷⁹ Martial from *Epigrams* 1 onward is deeply concerned with political power and its circumscription of writing and speech. In the books written in the last years of Domitian's principate and in the first years of his successors can be traced a movement from *emphatic* political criticism (especially of Domitian's moral legislation and his building program: *Epigrams* 9, issued in 95 CE) through jubilant liberation (at the new *licentia* under Nerva, poet-emperor and new Augustus: *Epigrams* 11, issued in 96 CE) into enigmatic silence (*Epigrams* 10, withdrawn in 96 CE and reissued in 98 CE). The contrast between the riotous, Saturnalian *licentia* of the Nerva book (in which the *Saturnalia* are restored to their status as a carnivalesque expression of Roman liberty: contrast *Stat. Silv.* 1.6 above) and the mannered silence of 'Trajanic' book 10 makes that silence as politically telling as the Domitianic indictments themselves. Martial's imminent return to Spain at the end of *Epigrams* 10 is index of a profound disenchantment with the possibilities for writing in post-Domitianic, 'liberated' Rome. The ideological triumphalism of *Libertas Publica* and *Libertas Restituta*, inscribed respectively in 96 CE on coins and on the Capitol, and echoed in such canonic texts as the opening of Tacitus' *Agricola* (3.1) and Pliny's *Epistles* (9.13.4), seems less than attested in the 'Trajanic' Rome of Martial. For Rome's finest epigrammatist overt truth and the imperial system seem, as always, dissident.

¹⁷⁷ Mason, pp. 583–88.

¹⁷⁸ It is also possible, of course, that part of Silius' epic belongs to the post-Domitianic years. The point about Martial's post-Domitianic writing is that it is self-consciously post-Domitianic.

¹⁷⁹ Fearnley, pp. 613–35.

6. *Amphitheatrical Rome*

Ferina ista rabies est sanguine gaudere ac uulneribus et abiecto homine in siluestre animal transire.

(Seneca, *De Clementia* 25.1)

It is rabid bestiality to take pleasure in blood and wounds, to cast off humanity and mutate into an animal of the forest.

Dissidence was in general a military, philosophical, aristocratic and/or literary privilege. The Roman people as a whole seems not to have been especially disenchanted with the Flavian principates. Titus, whose reputation as dissolute, corrupt son and ruthless praetorian commander was transformed on acceding to the throne,¹⁸⁰ was famously much loved, his *benevolentia* and *comitas*, his 'kindliness', proverbial (Suet. *Tit.* 8.1–2; Cass. Dio 66.18.5); and the provision of odeums (by both Vespasian and Domitian), circuses, gifts, baths, fora, a naumachia, the restoration of theatres (including the Theatre of Marcellus, Suet. *Vesp.* 19.1), the building of the Colosseum made Rome a more pleasurable city in which to live for the multitudinous urban poor. Even apart from such extraordinary festivals as the opening of the Colosseum, the Roman religious year at this time devoted some eighty or so days to games: *ludi circenses* involving chariot races; *ludi scaenici* involving theatrical productions, whether comic, tragic or (much more likely) mimic and pantomimic; amphitheatrical games (*munera*), involving gladiatorial fights and/or wild beast hunts (*uena-tiones*). Juvenal's much quoted barb was not without factual point:

nam qui dabat olim
imperium, fasces, legiones, omnia, nunc se
continet atque duas tantum res anxius optat:
panem et circenses.

(Juvenal, *Satire* 10.78–81)

¹⁸⁰ It seems to have been in deference to the Roman elite's marked xenophobia that Titus dismissed his 'foreign' lover, Queen Berenice, with whom he had lived openly in Rome since 75 CE, almost immediately upon his accession (Suet. *Tit.* 7.2)—despite the fact that she and her brother, the Judaeian king, Herod Agrippa II, had assisted the Flavians in the Jewish war and the latter had even been awarded *ornamenta praetoria* (75 CE). Titus had met and fallen in love with Berenice when he was in Judaea, and Suetonius reports that their separation in 79 CE was regretted on both sides (*inuitus inuitam*). A colonnade was erected in Titus' honour by his former mistress in Beirut.

A people that once bestowed
 Commands, consulships, legions, everything, now
 Pulls back, and only frets with desire for two things:
 Bread and circuses.

Flavian Rome was the greatest show on earth. The quinquennial *Capitolia* alone provided a most stirring series of sights, from the imperial parade toward the 'Flavianised' Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitol—with Domitian flanked by the *Flamen Dialis* and the *Sodales Flaviales Titiales*, the priests of the Flavian dynasty—to the poetic, oratorical and musical events of the festival itself in the recently constructed Odeum in the Campus Martius. The Domitianic Odeum twinned the one built by Vespasian, and was a grandly designed, roofed auditorium capable of seating perhaps 5,000–7,000 people, destined to become one of the most spectacular sites of late antiquity;¹⁸¹ it was spectacle housing spectacle. Since its capacity was much less than, say, the Theatre of Pompey in which Nero performed, it was also elite spectacle housing elite spectacle.

At Rome spectacle and politics were the same. As republican generals had always known, spectacle was integral to the operation of Roman power. At consular inaugurations, temple dedications, religious festivals, theatrical shows, aristocratic funerals, triumphal processions, Roman spectacle displayed and confirmed the social and political hierarchy, and enabled large-scale acquiescent participation by the Roman people in a system marked by an overtly uneven distribution of power. Rome was always a theatrical or even amphitheatrical culture in which performance, role-play, display and viewing were constitutive features. The elite spectacle of Domitian's Odeum achieved something rather more nuanced; it both confirmed the social and political hierarchy, and rewarded it.

Less elite, but more globally confirmatory, was the Flavian Amphitheatre or Colosseum, whose structure concretised in every sense Rome's culture of display. It provided in the centre of Rome a permanent site for political exhibition, confrontation and control, and thus not only refined 'the technology of spectacle as an element of imperial hegemony',¹⁸² but augmented its importance, restructured its power, tied its valency more securely to the emperor and pre-

¹⁸¹ See Hardie, pp. 130–33.

¹⁸² Gunderson, p. 643.

cisely to the Flavian *gens*. Apparently inspired, as noted above, by an unrealised Augustan idea (Suet. *Vesp.* 9.1), the Colosseum, as an early architrave inscription attests, was essentially Vespasian's project, financed by spoils of the Jewish war:

IMP·CAES·VESPASIANVS·AVG·
AMPHITHEATRVM·NOVVM
EX·MANVBIIS·FIERI·IVSSIT

IMP. CAES. VESPASIAN AUG.
THE NEW AMPHITHEATRE
FROM WAR SPOILS ORDERED BUILT

Later claimed by Titus, who inaugurated the building and inserted his name into the inscription,¹⁸³ the Colosseum became a didactic text on the operation of imperial power, a venue for the cultivation of 'privileged visibility' (to use Greenblatt's phrase, cited by Newlands)¹⁸⁴ and the promotion of a divine distance between the emperor (Titus, Domitian) and the Roman people, even as it suggested their congruence as participants in the power and empire of Rome. For what was presented to Roman spectators was the spectacle of the 'other': aberrant social groups, dwarfs, Amazonian women, criminals, military foes,¹⁸⁵ exotic animals, often drawn from the far corners of the empire, the fruits of centuries of conquest, all subjected to the superior gaze and pleasure of the master race seated hierarchically on high,¹⁸⁶ in a celebration of an imperial ideology, a world-order under Rome. A celebration that sometimes seemed an end in itself. The inaugural games to celebrate the Colosseum in 80 CE lasted some

¹⁸³ See Levick (1999) 127–8 and 247 n. 12 for the inscription and Titus' insertion.

¹⁸⁴ Newlands, p. 503.

¹⁸⁵ In the aftermath of the Jewish revolt the bulk of some 97,000 Jewish captives, according to Josephus (*BJ* 6.418–20), were distributed by Titus to various Roman provinces to be slaughtered by sword or beast in their arenas. While he was still in the east (at Caesarea), Titus had some 2,500 Jewish prisoners killed in the arena to celebrate Domitian's nineteenth birthday (*BJ* 7.38). The 'murder-games on sand' were not restricted to the capital.

¹⁸⁶ For the hierarchical seating of the amphitheatre, in which spectators were seated separately according to social rank, mirroring to some degree the social segregations of the theatre described above (p. 18), see Hopkins (1983) 17–18. 'To some degree' is important. The servile and libertine population of Rome would have been more in evidence in the Colosseum, in which also the imperial women were allocated privileged spaces in the imperial box. Not as strictly segregationist as the theatre itself, the amphitheatre yet mimicked the hierarchy of Rome.

one hundred days according to Cassius Dio (66.25.1–5), and involved the slaughter of thousands of animals on a single day.¹⁸⁷ One battle involved some 3,000 men. In addition to individual and mass combat, there were costly naval battles both in the Colosseum and in the Grove of Gaius and Lucius, where Augustus had held his *nau-machia* (cf. Mart. *Spect.* 34 [30, 28]). All was constructed around displays of imperial power:

quod pius et supplex elephas te, Caesar, adorat
hic modo qui tauro tam metuendus erat,
non facit hoc iussus, nulloque docente magistro:
crede mihi, nostrum sentit et ille deum.

(Martial, *De Spectaculis* 20 [17])

The elephant adores you, Caesar, piously prostrate,
The one just now who terrified the bull.
He does this unordered, with no master's instruction:
Believe me, he also feels our god.

The Flavian arena was a spectacle of power offered by and for the *princeps*, a pleasure dome of the people (*deliciae populi*, *Spect.* 2.12), their main surviving assembly,¹⁸⁸ and one designed to ensure both their status as master race and their subservience to the emperor, whose gaze was sometimes represented as agent not only of control, but of repression and terror (Pliny on Domitian: *Pan.* 33.3–4; Cass. Dio 67.8.3). Erik Gunderson's investigation¹⁸⁹ into the sociology of the Flavian arena presents it as the 'social organ of sight', 'an optical apparatus that reveals and makes present visual truths about Rome', presenting for the city's edification and delight 'fictions of empire, of mastery, of virtue, and of virility'¹⁹⁰—and of imperial legitimacy and power. His analysis of Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* and Martial's *De Spectaculis* shows how the arena's rhetoricity and spectacular theatre are imbricated with issues of truth, power and imperial authority, 'the logic of its stage . . . no different from the rules structuring the far more serious drama of everyday life'.¹⁹¹ Interestingly Martial's

¹⁸⁷ 5,000 on one day is Suetonius' figure (*Tit.* 7.3). 9,000 is Cassius Dio's figure (66.25.1), probably for the number of animals slain in the whole games.

¹⁸⁸ Hopkins (1983) 16: 'The amphitheatre was their parliament'. On 'gladiatorial shows as political theatre', see further Hopkins (1983) 14–20.

¹⁸⁹ Gunderson, pp. 637–58.

¹⁹⁰ Gunderson, pp. 644, 646.

¹⁹¹ Gunderson, p. 639.

choice of the *editor* or producer of the Colosseum's inaugural games, Titus, as the dedicatee of his *De Spectaculis*, replays the circular semiotics of amphitheatrical spectacle: the emperor as origin and *telos*. 'The truths of the arena are . . . specifically Caesarean truths: each message both comes from him [the emperor] and returns to him.'¹⁹² The arena became a theatrical solution to *the* political problem: how to procure legitimacy for the new spectacle of imperial power. Restaging the relationship between emperor and arena offered a visual display of the Flavian emperors as 'a stable locus of political and cultural meaning'.¹⁹³ Ironically, although the Flavian emperors used the arena to underscore their own power, the logic of the institution permitted the substitutability of the emperor himself, and the transience of the arena's pleasures (*spectandi levis uoluptas*, *Silv.* 1.6.52) became a pointer to the fluidity of the very social hierarchy which the arena seemed grandly to confirm.

The transience of the arena's pleasures are unsurprising, since they were in part erotic. *Gladius* meant penis as well as sword. Gladiatorial shows were theatres of sexual pleasure. According to the younger Pliny, they 'inspired a glory in wounds and a contempt for death' (*ad pulchra uulnera contemptumque mortis accenderet*, *Pan.* 33.1); more accurately, the gladiator was a sexual hero who satisfied erotic yearning as he penetrated unto death. Much later Augustine was to describe his friend Alypius melting orgasmically at the sight of gladiatorial penetration (*Conf.* 6.8): 'enraptured' (*abreptus*), 'stabbed' (*percussus*), 'wounded' (*graviore uulnere*), 'drunk with blood' (*cruenta uoluptate inebriatur*), and 'on fire' (*exarsit*), as all around glowed with pleasure. Not accidentally gladiatorial inscriptions from the Flavian period underscore the combatants' sexual prowess: (from the old *ludus* in Pompeii) *susprium puellarum traex Celadus* ('Celadus the Thracian, Girls' Heartthrob'), *puellarum decus Celadus tr[ae]x* ('Celadus the Thracian, Girls' Delight'), *Cresces retia[rius] puparum nocturnarum* . . . ('Cresces, Netter of Dolls at Night'), *Cresces puparru[m] dominus* ('Cresces, Lord of the Dolls').¹⁹⁴ So too reliefs and figurines, which feature gladiators fighting wild beast penises, sometimes their own.¹⁹⁵ With the gladiatorial skeletons found

¹⁹² Gunderson, p. 654.

¹⁹³ Gunderson, p. 639.

¹⁹⁴ Respectively: *CIL* 4.4342, 4345, 4353, 4356.

¹⁹⁵ See, e.g., the bronze *tintinnabulum* from Pompeii in Barton (1993) fig. 1, and the stone relief from Beneventum discussed by Hopkins (1983) 22.

in Pompeii was one of a jewel-encrusted female for whom the earth really moved.¹⁹⁶ Both Martial (*Epigr.* 5.24.10) and Juvenal (*Sat.* 6.104, 266) have a special word for a 'gladiator's moll': *ludia*. Juvenal predictably condemns the whole class with a dreadful pun: *ferrum est quod amant* ('the steel shaft is what they crave', 6.112). Petronius is more wryly observant (*Sat.* 126). Not that gladiators only functioned as erotic paradigms. They were philosophical ones too. The younger Seneca, for example, in the final years of the Neronian principate, had used the gladiator's deathly world, 'a world without quarter' (*munus sine missione*, *Ep.* 37.2), as a regular metaphor for his own, and had saturated his moral admonitions with gladiatorial language (see, e.g., *Ep.* 117.25). Despite his awareness of the difficulties of its application, Seneca saw in the gladiator's compact, resolution, indifference to pain and contempt for death an exemplary image of the invincible will of the Stoic *sapiens* (*Ep.* 37.1–2; cf. *Tranq.* 11.1–6; *Const.* 16.2).¹⁹⁷

Such seems to have been the interconnection between amphitheatrical spectacle and status in early imperial Rome that the amphitheatre became a venue for aristocratic refashioning. Outside Rome, in the towns of Italy and the provinces, games and amphitheatrical shows were still regularly financed by the local elite; but in the imperial city itself, which was where all significant status was obtained, although the tradition of having games funded by quaestors was restored by Domitian (Suet. *Dom.* 4.1), the days of aristocratic *munera* were essentially gone. The amphitheatre, however, although in the effective control of the emperor, still retained enough aristocratic associations for it to be a 'site for ideological contestation'.¹⁹⁸ A new social phenomenon had been emerging in the early empire, product of the increased marginalisation of the old Roman aristocracy: Roman elite males appearing as contestants in amphitheatrical events in an attempt, Andrew Zissos argues,¹⁹⁹ to reclaim some measure of prestige through displayed *nobilitas* and *uirtus*.²⁰⁰ Cassius Dio (61.17.3–5) and Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.32) attest senatorial appearances in the arena

¹⁹⁶ Noted by Hopkins (1983) 23, after Mau (1899) 157–8.

¹⁹⁷ See Barton (1993) 15–19.

¹⁹⁸ Zissos, p. 661.

¹⁹⁹ Zissos, pp. 677–84.

²⁰⁰ See also Hopkins (1983) 21. Contrast Shaw (2000) 396: '... the motive was not the allurements or excitement of the arena, but sheer material greed. It was the compulsion of poverty.' Shaw, however, is discussing the entry of free men into the arena, not simply the Roman elite.

for the Neronian period, as does Seneca writing in Nero's and his own final years (*Ep.* 87.9; *Q. Nat.* 7.31.3).²⁰¹ Dio (64.6.3) also reports Vitellius' attempts in 69 CE to prohibit gladiatorial appearances in the arena by members of the senatorial and equestrian classes. What success such legislation had is doubtful, and Dio (67.14.3) later reports the gladiatorial renown of the Domitianic ex-consular Acilius Glabrio. Indeed Dio nominates Domitian's jealousy in this regard as one of the reasons for Glabrio's execution in 95 CE (Suetonius cites only political reasons for this: *Dom.* 10.2). Such practices receive nothing but condemnation from the conservative Tacitus and the philosophic Seneca, who regards the flight to the arena as a *morbus* or 'disease' (*Q. Nat.* 7.31.3). And for each actual arena appearance there were probably countless narrative fantasies. The Zissos perspective is potentially a most fruitful one, and may find appropriate resonance in the amphitheatrical recasting of the mythical narrative of the Argonautic saga in Valerius Flaccus' epic, in which Zissos contends²⁰² that the fusion of 'contemporary elite performances in the arena with the mythical deeds of Argonautic heroes' legitimises those performances and 'asserts the continuing significance and heroism of the elite Roman male'.

Most, however, who appeared in the arena, received little prestige; they were tortured, burnt, dismembered in the most cruel and often mocking way. While the late Neronian Seneca decried the brutalising effect of the arena on the Roman spectators (he describes himself as returning from the games 'more greedy, power-hungry, decadent, cruel and inhuman' [*auarior . . . ambitiosior, luxuriosior, immo uero crudelior et inhumanior, Ep.* 7.3]), the later Christian evaluation of the arena, though contaminated by its own myth-making, signalled with some accuracy its erotic, murderous sadism. The arena featured its own pastiche of high culture too. Tragedies and myths were sometimes replicated in blood for the visual and literary pleasure of the world's master people.²⁰³ Let this 'witty' epigram of Martial, penned to describe and celebrate the Colosseum's inaugural games, be index of the 'otherness' of the world of Flavian Rome:

²⁰¹ For pre-Neronian examples, see Suet. *Aug.* 43.3, *Tib.* 35.2; Cass. Dio 48.43; 51.22; 56.25; 57.14.

²⁰² Zissos, p. 684.

²⁰³ See Coleman (1990) 44–73.

qualiter in Scythica religatus rupe Prometheus
 assiduam nimio pectore pauit auem,
 nuda Caledonio sic uiscera praebuit urso
 non falsa pendens in cruce Laureolus.
 uiuebant laceri membris stillantibus artus
 inque omni nusquam corpore corpus erat.
 denique supplicium <dignus tulit: ille parentis>
 uel domini iugulum foderat ense nocens,
 templa uel arcano demens spoliauerat auro,
 subdiderat saeuas uel tibi, Roma, faces.
 uicerat antiquae sceleratus crimina famae,
 in quo, quae fuerat fabula, poena fuit.

(Martial, *De Spectaculis* 9 [7])²⁰⁴

Like chained Prometheus on a Scythian crag
 Ever feeding the bird on too much breast,
 Laureolus hung on a non-fictive cross
 Offering Caledonia's bear naked flesh.
 The torn limbs were alive, their parts dripping,
 And the body was wholly bodiless.
 Finally he got fit punishment: the villain
 Had stabbed his father's or master's throat,
 Or, crazily, had robbed a shrine of secret gold,
 Or had put a cruel torch to you, Rome.
 The criminal had vanquished the crimes of legend,
 Who had turned a play into punishment.

Or is this world, as many claim,²⁰⁵ so 'other'? If the institutionalisation of erotic violence for large-scale visual consumption is the issue, here is the punishment judicially decreed for a nobleman in Elizabethan England and subsequently carried out for the amphitheatrical delight of its *spectatores*:

He should be conveyed to the Place from whence he came, and from thence to the place of Execution, and there to be hanged until he were half dead, his Members to be cut off, his Bowels to be cast into the Fire, his Head to be cut off, his Quarters to be divided into four several parts, and to be bestowed in four several places.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ Shackleton Bailey (1993) 18.

²⁰⁵ E.g., Hopkins (1983) 29 sees the gladiatorial shows as marking 'a deep cultural difference'. Hopkins (1999) 42 repeats the claim: 'If you need to be convinced that Romans were different, turn up on gladiator day'.

²⁰⁶ 'The Tryal of Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel, the 18th day of April, 1589, and in the 31st Year of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth', in *State Trials* 1.140-4. It is quoted by Bate (1995) 23-4.

Nor are spectatorial executions confined to the ‘otherness’ of Renaissance Europe. They take place regularly in many countries of the twenty-first century CE, including the USA, even if the number of *spectatores* is sometimes restricted. But what the ‘civilised’ western world now has for its mass delectation is the erotic, murderous sadism of modern visual media, which do much and possibly enough to destabilise claims of moral and cultural difference (and superiority). If those claims rest on the proposed difference of the institutional provision of the pleasures of surrogate killing from the provision of those of actual killing, they may be thought to be less than convincing.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ Thanks are due to Helen Morales, Brendan Nagle, John Pollini and Joseph Smith for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this introduction.

2. THE NEW ARISTOCRACY OF POWER

Ronald Mellor

The civil wars of 69 CE hardly equalled the century-long cataclysm from the Gracchi to Actium that destroyed the Roman republic. It was a mere eighteen months from the acclamation of Galba to the final victory of the Flavians. Nor were the brief civil wars of 69 CE followed by the dramatic political changes that came in the years following Pharsalus or Actium. Vespasian seemed content to place himself and his sons on the throne of the Julio-Claudians and continue the tradition of the co-operation between *princeps* and the senate.¹ Since the Flavian dynasty (69–96 CE) held power for little more than a quarter of the hundred years (31 BCE–68 CE) of the five Julio-Claudian emperors, the student of Roman history might understandably wonder whether the wars of 69 CE and the accession of a new dynasty were much more than a minor episode in the two centuries of the *pax Romana*—nothing more than a briefer encore of the Julio-Claudians. In the words of Ronald Syme, ‘The Flavian dynasty developed like the Julii and the Claudii, degenerate and intolerable’.²

This chapter will attempt to sketch the ways in which the Flavians not only prevailed in a civil war and inspired the cultural renaissance examined in the other chapters in this book, but set the stage for that remarkable century of political stability that Edward Gibbon called ‘the most happy and prosperous’.³ The Flavians’ most lasting contribution was the creation of a new aristocracy of power that determined the shape and direction of political and cultural life until the death of Commodus in 193 CE.

Any discussion of the Flavians must begin with the last of the Julio-Claudians, Nero. The twin vices of egoism and profligacy led him to reward flatterers, punish possible rivals, and ignore the reality

¹ *Lex de Imperio* attempts to ground Vespasian’s powers in the traditional grants to the Julio-Claudians: Brunt (1977) 95–116.

² Syme (1958) 43.

³ Gibbon (1897) 78.

of the Augustan settlement: that emperors ultimately derive their authority from control of the armies. Augustus and Tiberius well understood that secret of power; others might forget it until the civil war of 69 CE made it clear to all. So Nero sacrificed the loyalty of his troops by delaying their pay and by the execution of the popular general Corbulo.⁴ His quest for victories as a singer and his fawning to Greek audiences disgusted both senators and equestrians, and the rise in taxes hardly increased his popularity. Bread and circuses gained him support in the capital, until fire destroyed the city in 64 CE amid rumours that the emperor colluded in arson. Even the praetorian guard was increasingly dissatisfied; Nero only aroused real enthusiasm among Greeks who would espouse false Neros for decades to come.⁵

When Iulius Vindex led the Gallic legions into revolt in 68 CE, his rebellion was not impelled by nationalism as much as hostility to Nero. When the German army saluted their general, the *nouus homo* Verginius Rufus, as emperor, they sent a clear signal that the 'Augustan compact' between the army and the heirs of Iulius Caesar was finished.⁶ No heir of Nero survived. In the absence of a Julio-Claudian heir came the previously unthinkable: anyone could be acclaimed emperor. Even though the cautious Verginius refused the throne and remained loyal to his oath, the precedent had been set that made it possible even for a rustic Italian like Vespasian to contemplate the imperial throne.

Flavian Origins

Suetonius makes clear the humble origins of the Flavian house, and modern historians take almost perverse delight in the rustic roots of these hardworking Sabines: 'small people' says Syme,⁷ while Gibbon notes that 'the birth of Vespasian was mean'.⁸ Vespasian brought to the throne those Sabine qualities of frugality and caution, honesty

⁴ Cassius Dio (62.17) implies jealousy; Syme (1958) 562 points out Corbulo's connections to others accused of conspiracy against Nero.

⁵ Griffin (1964) 214–15.

⁶ Nicols (1978) 90.

⁷ Syme (1958) 44.

⁸ Gibbon (1897) 74.

and courage.⁹ It could have been much worse. His grandfather had fought with Pompey as a centurion at Pharsalus and later became a tax-collector. The emperor's father, Titus Flavius Sabinus, became a tax collector in Asia (where he was known for his honesty), and made a second career as a banker among the Helvetii (Suet. *Vesp.* 1). There was no reason for a soldier to be ashamed of such antecedents and Vespanian never was.

When Vespasian was born near Reate in 9 CE, any social distinction he had came from his mother and namesake, Vespasia Polla, whose brother was a senator. After the death of his father, his mother prodded her sons to seek military glory as commanders rather than as foot soldiers and the older brother, called Flavius Sabinus after his father, was the first to gain senatorial rank. A few years later, Vespasian gained the *latus clauus* and served as quaestor in Crete and Cyrene (Suet. *Vesp.* 2). Despite his mother's ambitions, it was a happy childhood and Vespasian retained a deep love for his homeland and, until his death, liked to return to a country retreat in Reate to work far from the pressures of Rome.¹⁰ Though we know nothing about his education, he was able to quote Homer in Greek (*Vesp.* 23). He was comfortable with his origins and even scorned the typical Roman desire to manufacture a noble ancestry (*Vesp.* 12).

Vespasian married Flavia Domitilla, a woman of humble origins. She died after bearing two sons, Titus and Domitian, and a daughter Domitilla. Vespasian never again married; thus Rome was spared yet another imperial stepmother like Livia and the younger Agrippina. He returned to a mistress of his youth, the freedwoman Caenis, and lived with her until her death about 75 CE. It was an important connection. Caenis had been the trusted private secretary of the imposing Antonia, daughter of Marc Antony and Octavia, niece of Augustus, widow of Drusus, mother of Germanicus and Claudius. It was Caenis who took her mistress' dictation of the secret letter that revealed to Tiberius on Capri the monstrosities of Sejanus (Cass. Dio 65.14). In Antonia's household Vespasian probably first met Claudius and her grandson Caligula as well as the eastern princes Iulius Agrippa of Judaea and Antiochus of Commagene. Though he was only barely elected aedile in 37 CE, two years later he led the list for praetor.

⁹ Wiseman (1978) 8.

¹⁰ Millar (1977) 28.

How? The answer is evident, though it goes against the carefully polished Flavian image of Vespasian as a self-reliant Sabine. Vespasian had shamelessly courted Caligula's approval by proposing games in his honour, advocating mistreatment of the bodies of executed conspirators, and even giving thanks to the emperor in the full senate for having invited him to dinner (Suet. *Vesp.* 2.3).

Antonia's son Claudius sent Vespasian as a legionary general to Germany and then, along with his brother Flavius Sabinus, he accompanied Claudius on the invasion of Britain in 43 CE. Sabinus returned to Rome in the emperor's entourage and within a few years would become consul. Vespasian led the *legio II Augusta* in its conquest of the Isle of Wight and southwest England, and his brilliant military record earned him the *ornamenta triumphalia* (Suet. *Vesp.* 4).¹¹ We know little of Vespasian's activities in the years between his return to Rome in 44 CE and his consulship during the last months of 51. Consuls had to wait at least a decade before a proconsular appointment, and those were anxious years for Vespasian. He had been a particular protégé of Claudius' freedman Narcissus, who was an enemy of Agrippina. After the deaths of Claudius and Narcissus in 54 CE, we can only presume Vespasian attended his private interests until Nero's murder of Agrippina in 59. In 62 CE he went to Africa as proconsul, for which there is little evidence and two contradictory judgements: Suetonius pronounced his rule honest and honourable (*Vesp.* 4), while Tacitus called it 'notorious and hated' (*Hist.* 2.97).

Later Flavian propaganda had to sanitise Vespasian's career under Nero and certain anomalies appear in the sources. Suetonius tells us that on his return from Africa, he was so impoverished that he had to borrow money from his brother and go into the business of raising mules, but his alleged impoverishment in the rich province of Africa is suspicious in one so gifted at squeezing funds from unpromising sources. Then he suddenly appears in Nero's retinue on the triumphal Greek concert tour of 66 CE, but is said to have fled for his life after dozing at an imperial concert. This sounds like a later Flavian invention, since we find Nero (while still on tour) suddenly appointing Vespasian as generalissimo of his eastern forces gathering to crush the Jewish revolt. It is likely that Vespasian was as sycophantic towards Nero as he had been towards Caligula. For Nero,

¹¹ Cf. Wiseman (1978) on Vespasian in England.

this rather dull, but able, soldier of no family distinction was the ideal successor to the charismatic Corbulo, whom Nero had summoned to Greece and ordered to be killed. Within two years Vespasian had achieved the upper hand over the Jewish rebels (Tac. *Hist.* 5.10).

The Emperors of 69 CE

The Julio-Claudians traced their ancestry to Aeneas and the goddess Venus, and such genealogies offered some consolation in times of crisis. Nero's governor of Spain, Servius Sulpicius Galba, likewise traced his roots through distinguished republican generals to, it was said, Jupiter (Suet. *Galb.* 2). So Galba was once tempted to reach for the imperial crown after the assassination of Caligula. In 69 CE, at the age of 65, Galba accepted the appeal of Vindex to lead his legions against Nero in the name of the senate. Then, after receiving news of the emperor's suicide in June 68 CE, he himself took the title of Caesar. His intentions may have been honourable, but his self-righteous rigidity left him unable to deal with the practical politics of the situation. Though he reached Rome without difficulty, Galba made no attempt to win over the restless praetorians. He was unpopular with the legions for refusing to pay the promised donative, and his unbending austerity was particularly unpleasant to the Roman populace after Nero's liberality. The first day of January 69 CE brought insurrection in Germany where the generals led the legions to declare for Vitellius. Galba had forgotten his own lesson: that emperors can be made outside of Rome. He made his final error when he adopted Piso, and both were soon killed in the Forum. Galba, who had for so long been admired for his moral rectitude and old-fashioned attitudes, never understood what went wrong. This last representative of the dying breed was baffled and impotent to deal with new political and military realities. *Capax imperii nisi imperasset* ('He would have been thought competent to rule if only he had not done so', Tac. *Hist.* 1.49).

Galba was the last emperor who could trace his family to the republican nobility. His immediate successors were men of lesser lineage and, more importantly, more corrupt natures. Otho actually acted more nobly during his brief reign than his previous profligate life would have predicted; after his troops lost to the crack German legions at Cremona, he committed suicide to spare Italy further

battles. The lazy and selfish Vitellius, having gained the empire without even being present with his army, treated Italy and Rome as conquered territory. He brought 75,000 legionaries into the capital where they loafed—disorganised, undisciplined, and weakened by illness (Tac. *Hist.* 2.93). Vitellius' generosity won over the *plebs*, but the elite only paid lip service while waiting for the final act of the play. Vitellius had foolishly killed the centurions of Danubian legions which had arrived to fight with Otho, so the opposition first grew on the Danube and in Vespasian's armies in the East. Otho's praetorians, ejected from their camp but not disbanded, went over to the Flavian forces in northern Italy as did the Ravenna and Misenum fleets. At least half the legions were actively hostile to Vitellius, and the fall of 69 CE brought an inexorable tide against him.

The Military Triumph of Vespasian

The Sabine origins of the Flavians made both Vespasian and Flavius Sabinus loyal subordinates; their military ability was not accompanied by excessive political ambition. Vespasian's early career might have elements of sycophancy and rumours of avarice, but there was no criticism of his military accomplishments in Judaea. He marched before his troops, avoided unnecessary battles, and quietly won the loyalty of his army.¹²

The Romans believed that Fortune played an important role in guiding the destiny of successful public figures, and Tacitus repeatedly emphasises how vital it was to Vespasian (*Agr.* 13; *Hist.* 4.81; *Ann.* 16.5). When this able general came to the East, his royal friends Iulius Agrippa and Antiochus provided contingents to help pacify the Jewish rebels. As was often the case among adjoining Roman governors, Vespasian in Judaea and G. Licinius Mucianus in Syria were initially mutually distrustful. Mucianus had gifts that Vespasian lacked: sophistication and charisma, oratorical ability, skill at political manipulation and long-term vision. But the death of Nero brought these two complementary figures together. At first they may have come together for mutual protection as it became clear that Galba,

¹² Nicols (1978) 115–16.

to whom they pledged loyalty, was doomed. Mucianus was intelligent enough to realise that Vespasian had what he himself lacked: a military reputation and two grown sons to ensure succession. Mucianus was especially fond of the affable Titus, who thought briefly of reaching for the throne even before his deliberate father dared to act.¹³ Mucianus saw even before his cautious colleague that the legionary acclamation of Verginius Rufus, a *novus homo* born in Milan, paved the way for an Italian *princeps* and Vespasian would also benefit from Flavius Sabinus' position as prefect of the city in Rome.

The news from the West was both encouraging and terrifying. Galba had shown his incapacity for rule, and Otho and Vitellius were lesser men. Yet if Vespasian thought he could take the throne, he must have worried about his own capacity to hold it and to govern. No one had successfully seized supreme power since Augustus, and he had the mantle of Caesar to bind the troops to him. So Vespasian took, in turn, oaths of loyalty to Galba, Otho, and even Vitellius, while he slowly moved toward a decision. He had no political support among the senatorial elite nor among the Roman masses, nor any loyalty among the western legions; the creation of the Flavian dynasty was begun in the army camps and royal palaces of the East.

Prodded by his son Titus, his ambitious ally Mucianus, and his royal friends and Jewish allies, the sixty-year-old general hesitantly moved toward the decisive step. His intimate circle now included Agrippa, his sister princess Iulia Berenice, and the Jewish prefect of Egypt Tiberius Iulius Alexander, whose father he had known at Antonia's court. They, as well as the Cappadocian Antiochus and the Syrian king Iulius Sohaemus, ancestor of Iulia Domna and the Syrian emperors of the Severan dynasty, provided the money he needed to pay for troops, supplies, and fleets.¹⁴ In a civil war local kings could only support the nearest candidate for the throne and hope he was successful; otherwise they would need to switch allegiance as deftly as Herod the Great had from Antony to Octavian. Vespasian's Jewish connections also provided a wide assortment of prophecies and portents, including the famous prediction in the book of Daniel that a new ruler would arise in the East.¹⁵ These stories

¹³ Nicols (1978) 93–4.

¹⁴ Nicols (1978) 127–9.

¹⁵ Swain (1940); now Potter (1994) 173.

fuelled the Flavian propaganda machine to galvanise the troops and cloaked Vespasian with a rustic humility.¹⁶

In May Vespasian heard of the defeat and suicide of Otho at Bedriacum and the accession of Vitellius. Within a month, in a meeting near Mount Carmel, Vespasian and Mucianus began to strategise in earnest with their officers.¹⁷ There Mucianus gave a stirring public speech calling on Vespasian to seek the throne for the good of the state (Tac. *Hist.* 2.76–8). On 1 July 69 CE the legions stationed in Alexandria acclaimed Vespasian as emperor and the Judaeian legions soon followed. Within two weeks, after a speech of Mucianus alluded to rumours that Vitellius intended to transfer them to the undesirable posting on the Rhine, the Syrian legions followed suit so that all nine eastern legions were now in revolt again Vitellius. And there was already support in Corbulo's *legio III Augusta*, which had recently been transferred to Moesia from its Syrian camp. The Danubian troops were always jealous of the privileges gained by the Rhine legions, and the success of Vitellius spurred them to seek their own candidate. Some troops marched into Italy to support Otho at Bedriacum, but arrived too late. When Vitellius murdered their centurions, he incurred the lasting enmity of the Danubian troops. Hence it was the foot soldiers themselves, rather than their commanders, who looked to Vespasian in the spring of 69 CE, months before he was actually acclaimed in the East. Civil war can bring rewards to legionaries, but it can pose a terrifying dilemma for high officers who suffer fatal retribution for choosing the wrong side. Suetonius learned the soldiers' mood from his own father who served on the Danube at that time (Suet. *Otho* 10, *Vesp.* 6). Secret letters from Mucianus fanned the anti-Vitellian feelings of these legions and brought them into the Flavian camp. At the instigation of the energetic Antonius Primus, commander of *legio XIII Gemina*, Vespasian was acclaimed in Pannonia in August.

The eastern and Danubian legionaries were the decisive elements in the success of the Flavian insurrection. The principal role of the western legions and their generals was to maintain a neutral posture.¹⁸ The soldiers knew that Vespasian was a successful general who was popular with his own troops, and his successful service in

¹⁶ Scott (1936) 1–20; Wiseman (1978) 16–17.

¹⁷ Nicols (1978) 73.

¹⁸ Nicols (1978) 146–50.

Britain, along with his promise to respect promotions made by Vitellius, kept the troops there neutral. Letters were sent to all the armies, and these doubtless promised promotions and bonuses that, because modest, were the more credible (Tac. *Hist.* 2.82). The omens and prophecies from the East were also disseminated to the western legions. Vitellius had cruelly punished Othonian sympathisers; the Flavians more shrewdly understood that a more tolerant posture was more likely to push the soldiers towards neutrality. While the Spanish legions were sympathetic to any opponent of Vitellius, the Germans naturally leaned towards that emperor. But even along the Rhine support was tepid; old enmities between the legions of upper and lower Germany kept the troops from rushing to Italy to oppose the Flavian advance.

Despite the presence of Flavius Sabinus in Rome, there was little organised Flavian support in Italy. Sabinus was a survivor; he had been prefect of the city for twelve years under Claudius and Nero, and was returned to that post by Otho and kept by Vitellius. He must have been an extraordinarily efficient administrator. He was careful to remain an honest broker between his brother and Vitellius, and he did not organise Flavian support in the capital. The Roman masses were delighted with Vitellius' profligate ways, while most senators were prudently silent. Later, of course, all claimed to have supported the Flavian cause all along (Tac. *Hist.* 3.69). But in Italy only the sailors of the fleets based at Ravenna and Misenum truly supported Vespasian. The Ravenna fleet, recruited from along the Danube, were led by their commander Lucilius Bassus into the Flavian camp in October of 69 CE, while Apinius Tiro led the revolt of the Misenum fleet (Tac. *Hist.* 3.36 [Ravenna], 57 [Misenum]). Their rewards were considerable. After the war the sailors were made into legionaries in the *legio II Adiutrix* and a new military diploma shows that by 26 February 70 CE—a mere two months after the Flavian victory—members of the Ravenna fleet were given citizenship.¹⁹ The rapid conversion of the fleet into legionaries and the grant of citizenship makes it likely that promises were made by Vespasian's commander in northern Italy, Antonius Primus, and the new emperor (unlike Galba) knew the advantage of quickly making good on his commitments.

¹⁹ Roxan (1996) 247–56.

It is difficult to distinguish actual Flavian policy during the Italian campaign from later apologists who exaggerated Vespasian's reluctance to cause violence and who wished to find other scapegoats for the sack of Cremona and the burning of the Capitol. Tacitus' sources were written under the Flavians and the skilful propaganda machine of the new regime—we need only think of Josephus and the elder Pliny—made it difficult for him and *a fortiori* for us to recover the actual policy decisions that lay behind the military engagements. In late October of 69 CE Antonius Primus and Cornelius Fuscus confronted the Vitellians near Cremona (Tac. *Hist.* 3.13–35). The Vitellian defeat and surrender led to the most horrifying event of the civil war—the sack of the ancient Italian city of Cremona as though it was an enemy capital. The arrival of Fabius Valens from Rome was far too late; the Flavians controlled Italy north of the Apennines and the devastation of Cremona impelled the Roman elite to end the war. Much of the subsequent movement to Vespasian was not driven by admiration, but by the realisation that only his victory would end the war and restore normality.²⁰

Antonius Primus led the Flavian armies down the peninsula while Vitellius desperately sought some solution. Tacitus (*Hist.* 3.63–85) gives a detailed, and emotionally engaged, account of the weak Vitellius' inability to confront the reality he had created. The Vitellians drove Sabinus and some Flavians to the refuge of the Capitol. In the subsequent fighting, the Temple of Jupiter was burned while Sabinus was captured and executed on 19 December. Despite accusations that Sabinus had been indecisive and even envious of his brother, Tacitus (*Hist.* 3.65, 75) repeatedly paints the picture of a devoted patriot, an honourable rival, and a compassionate man. He is without question the most noble character to play a major role in the civil war. The day after his death, Antonius Primus led the Flavian army into the city and Vitellius was killed. On 22 December the senate voted to Vespasian all the titles, honours, and powers conferred on emperors (Tac. *Hist.* 4.3). Though Vespasian did not arrive in Rome until October of 70 CE, the civil war of 69 was over; the political reconstruction could begin.

How did Vespasian, having delayed so long, win so easily? One answer was the superb army developed by Corbulo. For a decade

²⁰ Nicols (1978) 168.

under Nero Gn. Domitius Corbulo instilled discipline and morale in the eastern legions while he governed first Galatia and Cappadocia, then Syria, and finally both provinces. He gained the best reputation of any general (except Tiberius) of the Julio-Claudian era. His legions enjoyed a collective *esprit de corps* as 'Corbulo's men'—even after his death at the hands of Nero. These were men with military experience, a disciplined chain of command, and officers of humble backgrounds with genuine leadership abilities. This was to become the core of the Flavian party.²¹ Vespasian took over the military *clientela* of Corbulo among the eastern legions. Mucianus was the only consular stationed in the East and his whole-hearted support of Vespasian ensured that the eastern armies remained united. Those eastern officers would indeed reap high political posts and the greatest rewards from the eventual Flavian victory.

For a year after Cremona Vespasian remained in the East. He realised that control of Egypt was, in the long term, essential for the provisioning of Rome with grain, so he left the siege of Jerusalem to Titus and proceeded to Alexandria. There he visited the Temple of Serapis and, Suetonius would have us believe, this diffident soldier gained confidence when he saw the miraculous results of his reluctant laying of hands on the blind and lame (*Vesp.* 7). He hoped that Titus would take Jerusalem quickly, so they both might return with booty and captives for a great triumph. As it turned out, he had to leave Titus in Judaea to complete the siege. On his long journey to Rome, Cassius Dio tells us Vespasian retained his common touch, 'greeting all as though he were a private citizen rather than an emperor' (τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους πάντας οὐχ ὡς αυτοκράτωρ ἀλλ' ὡς ιδιώτης . . . ἐδεξιόυτο, 65.10.1). He made benefactions to soldiers and citizens alike, and began the reconstruction of the Temple of Jupiter by carrying the first load of soil himself. The Flavian propagandists praised Vespasian as *civilis*, and he does indeed seem to have retained his native good nature and common sense.

Another fortunate result of the civil war for Vespasian was in the lack of dissension within the Flavian camp. Tacitus in his obituary of Sabinus reports: *caedem eius laetam fuisse Muciano accepimus. ferebant plerique etiam paci consultum dirempta aemulatione inter duos, quorum alter se*

²¹ Syme (1958) 593; also Syme (1958) 789–90 (Appendix 84: 'The Role of Corbulo's Legates'). Cf. Nicols (1978) 99–131 on the building of the Flavian faction in the East.

fratrem imperatoris, alter consortem imperii cogitaret ('We are told that his murder gave pleasure to Mucianus. A widely held theory was that peace actually gained from the cessation of rivalry between two men, of whom one might have well reflected that he was the emperor's brother, and the other that he was his colleague', *Hist.* 3.75). While it seems unnecessarily malicious to attribute these feelings to Mucianus, it can hardly be denied that the compact leadership at the apex of the Flavian party was an enormous advantage. In the republic Romans saw the advantages of a large family with extended connections; under the empire the relatives proved to be more dangerous than useful. Now there was one senior advisor, one experienced son, few other relatives, and no empress with an inconvenient collection of in-laws. The principal problems were the headstrong Antonius Primus and young Domitian who had played the petty tyrant in his father's absence from Rome. Primus was quietly sent back in retirement to his native Toulouse. Vespasian kept Domitian firmly in check during his lifetime. If we think back to the Julio-Claudian problems with succession and palace rivalries, we realise the magnitude of Vespasian's fortune. It allowed him to choose his government from the loyal and the gifted.

The Creation of New Leadership

The Flavians did not just win the military battles of 69 CE, but they won the political war. Vespasian certainly intended to retain ultimate autocratic power in his own hands and to think in dynastic terms, though he was secure enough to avoid the offensive trappings of power. Augustus was his model in establishing not only a ruling family but a revitalised elite to administer the empire. But, unlike Augustus, he did not have to create a political structure and conceal his military base of power. That was a given; Vespasian unashamedly held eight ordinary consulships in his ten years of power; Titus held seven ordinary consulships; while Domitian held one ordinary and five suffect consulships. The Flavians were not afraid to flaunt their political dominance.

Suetonius conveys through his many anecdotes the unpretentiousness and mercy of Vespasian, and Tacitus comments that Vespasian was the only emperor to *improve* after taking power (*Hist.* 1.50). His *clementia* was made much easier by Mucianus' removal of Antonius

Primus, which allowed the Flavian party—however many ruthless and ambitious men it contained—to remain a disciplined and coherent political force. Even Augustus had to deal with Cornelius Gallus, Murena, Maecenas, Iulia's lovers, and the sullen Tiberius; Vespasian could, with the single exception of Helvidius Priscus, adopt the role of the merciful ruler.

Priscus, sometimes called the leader of a 'Stoic opposition,' was son-in-law of Thrasea Paetus who was regarded as a Stoic martyr under Nero. Though Vespasian had abolished treason trials and could jokingly call the Cynic philosopher Demetrius *canem* ('dog'),²² the tenacious and self-righteous Helvidius drove the emperor to the end of his tether since Helvidius opposed the very concept of the principate. Tacitus depicts him as a fiery, unrealistic, proponent of senatorial rights (*Hist.* 4.4–9). Cassius Dio provides the most negative view of Helvidius in which he calls him 'a rabble-rouser who appealed to the mob and denounced kingship and praised democracy' (ταραχώδης τε ἦν καὶ τῷ ὄχλῳ προσέκειτο, βασιλείας τε αἰεὶ κατηγορεῖ καὶ δημοκρατίαν ἐπῆνει, 65.12.2).²³ Helvidius addressed a tirade to Vespasian, and probably to Titus, on the subject of hereditary succession, and was arrested by the tribunes. Suetonius says that Vespasian tried, too late, to countermand the order for execution (Cass. Dio 66.12.1).²⁴ One convincing theory is that Titus had issued the original order.²⁵

But the Helvidius episode was an exception. Otherwise Vespasian looked away from his former patrons Nero and Caligula to other Julio-Claudians as his model. His coinage, his building of the new Forum of Peace, and his extensive literary patronage harkened back to Augustus. The *Lex de Imperio* of December 69 CE publicly based the imperial power on that of Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius.²⁶ Vespasian was not trying to avoid connection with the Julio-Claudians; in fact he promoted it, as long as he maintained a distance from Nero. He buried his close connection with Nero (who had given him

²² Bauman (1974) 157 on trials; Suet. *Vesp.* 13 on Demetrius.

²³ Wirzburksi (1960) 149 says that 'Dio misunderstood Helvidius just as he misunderstood the Augustan principate'.

²⁴ Bauman (1974) 158–9 suggests Titus' role in the death of Helvidius.

²⁵ Cf. Suet. *Tit.* 3.2, 6.1 on Titus' skill as a forger and his control of Vespasian's papers.

²⁶ Brunt (1977) 95–116 believes the document is based on that of 37 CE; hence the inclusion of the undefined Tiberius. Cf. Tac. *Hist.* 4.3 on the conferral.

his consulship and the Judaeian command) as thoroughly as he buried Nero's Golden House under the Colosseum.

Otherwise, there was much to do and Vespasian did it well: consolidate the imperial frontiers after the neglect of Nero and the turmoil of civil war; settle the discharged veterans as Augustus had done; reform the army to prevent further insurrection; rebuild the solvency of the treasury; develop an effective political and administrative elite; imbue his new Sabine dynasty with the aura of greatness; and, in the words of his biographer, embellish the state after he had restored it (Suet. *Vesp.* 8). It was a full agenda and the *princeps* made remarkable progress in a mere decade of rule.

He first needed to restore order along the Rhine and Danube. Hence his campaigns against the rebels in the lower Rhine and Moselle valleys. The troops of the Batavian Iulius Civilis and the Gallic Iulius Classicus were intimidated or defeated by Q. Petillius Cerialis in 70 CE. Further south in Germany, Vespasian annexed the so-called Agri Decumates (Black Forest) in 73–74 CE, creating a link between the Rhine and Danube frontiers. Rome once again flexed its military muscle against any restless provincials and barbarians. He also dispersed legions in separate camps to discourage rebellion, and stationed auxiliaries away from their homelands where they might be tempted to follow local national leaders.

Though Vespasian is often depicted as stolid rather than imaginative, he chose wisely from the many precedents available to him. Hence he gave citizenship to some auxiliaries who had fought with him, and bestowed Latin rights to most of the cities of Spain. Legionary recruitment was extended to Gaul and Spain, and leading men of the Spanish towns appeared in increasing numbers in Roman administration. More than any of his predecessors, Vespasian became emperor of the entire empire rather than merely of the senate, the Roman *plebs*, and the army.

The stinginess of Vespasian is a recurring theme in the sources, but this was less avarice than a necessary fiscal policy. The treasury had been emptied by the extravagance of Nero, the costs of civil war and the lost taxes caused by it, the dissipation of Vitellius, and the reconstruction of the Capitol. Even if Vespasian was thought to have been onerous in collecting taxes and abolishing tax exemptions, the sources agree that the money was well spent on roads, a new forum, and the Colosseum (Suet. *Vesp.* 16). He even devoted resources to the patronage of literature, art, and education (*Vesp.* 18–19). Epic

poetry was fostered and a public library was established at the Forum of Peace. But the emperor distanced official portraiture from the Hellenic ideals of the Julio-Claudian; Flavian art returned to traditional republican realism.

Of course the most significant members of the 'new regime' were Vespasian's sons Titus and Domitian. The emperor struggled against Stoic opposition to preserve dynastic succession and he was successful. Unfortunately Titus only ruled for two years (79–81 CE). Raised as gilded youth at court of Claudius, Titus was thought to have the arrogant manners of a prince (Suet. *Tit.* 7), and even engaged in a long love-affair with the Jewish princess Iulia Berenice—the sister of his friend Iulius Agrippa. But, despite some lingering questions about his character, he was one of the best prepared emperors ever to come to power. He had been a successful general during the Jewish wars, and presided over the final taking of Jerusalem. He even put aside Berenice to pacify aristocrats squeamish about an eastern queen. Like his father he rose to the task; his chief failing was his early death.

Domitian (81–96 CE) was not yet twenty when he found himself in Rome during the months before Vespasian's arrival. Tacitus tells us that Domitian acted the role of an emperor and he even was saluted as 'Caesar' after the death of Vitellius (*Hist.* 4.2, 3.86). Though Domitian had never commanded troops, his ambitions sufficiently worried Mucianus that he remained in Rome to keep the young prince under observation until Vespasian arrived. But twelve years later, after the death of Titus, there was no alternative and Domitian's succession was unchallenged.

Though Domitian was far from incompetent, his long wait in the antechamber of power left him bitter. He made no attempt to cloak from the senate his desire for absolute power, and wished to be referred to *dominus et deus* both in conversation and in official documents (Suet. *Dom.* 13; Cass. Dio 67.4.7). But if Domitian had none of the restraint or geniality of his father and brother, he was like them successful as a military commander and kept a steady hand on imperial administration.²⁷ His suspicion of senatorial opponents led to the return of informers, the conspiracy of Saturninus in 89 CE,

²⁷ Syme (1958) 43 called him 'worse than Nero, for Domitian kept the armies under control and knew how to govern an empire'.

and finally the three-year 'reign of terror' that closed his reign. Though the hostile accounts of Tacitus and Pliny are more believable than the craven panegyrics cranked out by poets, they had also profited from Domitian's favour earlier in his reign. His assassination in 96 CE, while carried out by a former servant, probably involved the collaboration of his wife and many distinguished senators.

The New Aristocracy

The most important legacies of the Flavians to Rome do not lie in the personalities, persecutions or perversions of the emperors themselves. Firstly, Vespasian and his supporters brought an end to a civil war that might have permanently undermined Roman authority in the provinces. The rebellions in Gaul and Lower Germany might well have been followed by revivals of earlier insurrections in Britain and North Africa. Judaea had only recently been subjugated, and other eastern and Danubian frontiers were far from secure. The second great contribution of Vespasian was to restore the fiscal health and economic vitality of the empire. Nero had devalued the currency and emptied the treasury even before the civil wars disrupted the commercial life of the Mediterranean world; the Flavians, even including Domitian, were careful to ensure that imperial income was adequate for both domestic entertainments and foreign wars.

The most lasting legacy of the Flavians was the creation of a new aristocracy that was to rule Rome in peace for nearly a century after the death of Domitian. It is sometimes forgotten that, when Augustus replaced republican families with a new elite, he was only creating an administrative class. Political authority remained with the imperial family alone. Though Vespasian intended that his dynasty would likewise control ultimate political authority, he had seen Nero surround himself with sycophants and understood the need for a new group of talented men—like himself, he might have thought—to administer the empire and defend its frontiers.

In the *Historiae*, Tacitus traces the rise of the Flavian party as the victorious faction in the civil war. His eye is on something more important: the rise of the new ruling class that would dominate Rome not only under the Flavians, but during the following decade when Tacitus wrote his book. Tacitus knew the importance of that group since he was part of it, and the lost books 5–12 of his *Historiae* would

certainly have shed light on that new political class. Of course Tacitus was not to know that that class would survive long after his own death.

The senate was much diminished at the accession of Vespasian, and the old republican aristocracy had virtually disappeared.²⁸ The emperor needed to expand both the senatorial and equestrian orders to bring talent into the administration of empire. Like Augustus Vespasian brought in Italians, but he went further in bringing into the senate western provincials, and even a few easterners.²⁹ One estimate is that twenty percent of new Vespasianic senators were provincials.³⁰ His regime rested on the loyalty of both Italian and provincial elite.³¹ He not only added twenty quaestors to the senate annually, but he also adlected more new senators than any other emperor of the first or second centuries.³² He rewarded many of his equestrian supporters by bringing them into the senate, and praetorian legates reached the consulship and later held important governorships. Other Claudian and Neronian senators from the western provinces, like Iulius Agricola and M. Ulpius Traianus (father of the emperor), were raised to greater heights.³³

Vespasian and Titus held the ordinary consulships in most years, but brought into suffect consulships early Flavian supporters whose families would dominate the political leadership of the empire for more than a century. Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus, and Marcus Aurelius could all trace their ancestry to men promoted by Vespasian.³⁴ As a result, the new aristocracy had far greater military expertise than the tired aristocrats of the Neronian era. The army became correspondingly more efficient and secured the empire and the throne for more than a century. Perhaps that does not seem impressive unless one looks at the pattern of civil discord before Augustus and after Commodus. Even three of Augustus' four Julio-Claudian successors were murdered, while Domitian was the only case of regicide among the eight emperors from Vespasian to Marcus Aurelius in the

²⁸ Hammond (1957) 75 estimates that patricians of republican ancestry constituted about two per cent of the senate in 69 CE.

²⁹ Halfmann (1979) 71–73.

³⁰ Hammond (1957) 77.

³¹ Syme (1958) 595.

³² Talbert (1984) 134.

³³ Syme (1958) 594–5.

³⁴ Nicols (1978) 99.

century from 79 to 180 CE. Tacitus (*Hist.* 2.95) and Ronald Syme believe that the system did not change, only the names were different.³⁵ Yet the long term effect on imperial government cannot be discounted and perhaps needs to be sought in the nature of the men brought into high office by Vespasian.

Who comprised this new elite and why were they chosen? There is no easy answer, since the wily Vespasian did not just restrict his favours to a single obvious group like political supporters or relatives or comrades-in-arms. Another complication is that many men appear as suffect consuls under Vespasian of whom virtually nothing else is known, and many of those consuls who are known cannot be firmly dated.³⁶ Perhaps it would be best to sketch the careers of representative members of the new elite—restricting the survey to men who reached the consulship under Vespasian—while attempting to discover why the emperor valued them.³⁷ Scholars are faced with the difficult task, using prosopography and other tools, in teasing from the account of the civil war itself the origins of the new post-war aristocracy.³⁸ I will outline some general features of a new military and political elite with brief sketches of some of the most important Flavians to reach the consulship in the first decade after the civil war.³⁹

Relatives

The Roman aristocracy had traditionally used their extended family for political connections, and Augustus used nephews, step-sons, in-laws, and grandchildren in a variety of administrative posts. In that context, it is surprising how little political use Vespasian made of his extended family. Of course his older brother, T. Flavius

³⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 2.95: *magis alii homines quam alii mores* ('different men rather than different characters'); Syme (1958) 594: 'Rulers change, not the system'. Nicols (1978) 168–9 agrees that the Flavians were no better than the Vitellians.

³⁶ The consular *fasti* have been collected in Degraffi (1952). Cf. Syme (1985) 637–9 for a discussion of the problems.

³⁷ Details on the Flavian elite may be found in the *PIR*¹, *PIR*² and *KP*; also cf. Eck (1970) and Nicols (1978).

³⁸ Most valuable in this regard are Syme (1958); Hammond (1959); Eck (1970); Nicols (1978); Halfmann (1979).

³⁹ Almost every date in these biographies is disputed. Since they are unnecessary for our purposes, I follow (unless otherwise noted) the dates in *PIR*¹ and *PIR*².

Sabinus,⁴⁰ would undoubtedly have played a central role in the new administration if he had not been murdered by Vitellian troops. His son, also T. Flavius Sabinus,⁴¹ was designated by Nero as ordinary consul for 69 CE but he lost that position with the death of the emperor. Nevertheless, in the spring of 69 CE, he was favoured by Otho with a suffect consulship and governed Rome in that emperor's absence. His uncle named him to a second consulship in 72 CE.⁴² He thereafter held the post of *curator* of public works before disappearing from the historical record presumably due to his death. Though there is no evidence of hostility between Vespasian and his brother's family, the deaths removed any possibility of the rival family factions that had so troubled the Julio-Claudians.

One prominent in-law was L. (Iunius) Caesennius Paetus,⁴³ who served as consul ordinarius in 61 CE. Paetus had married Flavia Sabina, the daughter of Sabinus, in the 40s CE and remained an important member of a group of Flavian supporters in Rome. As an envoy of Nero to Cappadocia about 63, he tried to support the Armenians and ended in surrendering his troops to the Parthian Vologeses (Cass. Dio 62.20–1). He held no post thereafter until Vespasian installed him in the important post of governor of Syria in 70 CE, but there again he seems to have bungled his duties through a treacherous attack on Antiochus of Commagene, a long-time ally of Vespasian (Joseph. *Bj* 7.219–43). The Flavians had more luck with Paetus' son of the same name.⁴⁴ He was the grandson of Sabinus and hence a blood relation (great-nephew) of Vespasian and his sons. The younger Paetus had served with Corbulo in Armenia and was named suffect consul for 79 CE. About 94 CE he reached the pinnacle of senatorial administration by serving as proconsul of Asia.

Another Flavian relative was Q. Petillius Cerialis,⁴⁵ described by Cassius Dio as related to Vespasian by marriage, probably the husband of Vespasian's daughter Flavia (65.18.1).⁴⁶ In his earlier service as legate of *IX Hispania* in Britain, he was defeated by Boudicca's

⁴⁰ *PIR*² F352.

⁴¹ *PIR*² F354.

⁴² I here follow Nicols (1978) 169 rather than *PIR*² F354.

⁴³ *PIR*² C173.

⁴⁴ *PIR*² C174.

⁴⁵ *PIR*² P260.

⁴⁶ Tac. *Hist.* 3.59 refers more generally to the *propinqua adfinitas* ('close connection') between Cerialis and Vespasian.

army and saw his infantry slaughtered (Tac. *Ann.* 14.32). Late in 69 CE he fled Rome to join the Flavian forces and led an unsuccessful cavalry attack on the capital in an attempt to save Sabinus. Soon after in 70 CE he was sent by Mucianus to suppress the revolt of the Gauls to whom he delivered his famous speech in defence of the Roman empire (Tac. *Hist.* 4.73–4). He was rewarded with the suffect consulship of 71 CE before being sent as governor of Britain from 71 to 74. There he was sufficiently successful against the Brigantes that he was given his second consulship in May of 74 CE. The Petillius Rufus⁴⁷ who served as consul ordinarius with Domitian in 83 CE was probably his son.

Another relation was M. Arrecinus Clemens,⁴⁸ the brother-in-law of Titus through his first wife Arrecina Tertulla. His father⁴⁹ had been praetorian prefect under Caligula. Clemens was a friend of Domitian and, despite being a senator, was named by Mucianus as praetorian prefect in 70 CE (Tac. *Hist.* 4.68).⁵⁰ He was suffect consul in 73 CE and served as governor of Hispania Citerior in 81. He was one of only four senators to be honoured with a second consulship by Domitian—probably in 85 CE.⁵¹ He was condemned by Domitian, though not before the emperor indulged his black sense of humour by taking Clemens for a drive and pointing out the man who had informed on him (Suet. *Dom.* 11).

Early Flavian Supporters

A Gaul who had a spectacular career under the Flavians was S. Iulius Frontinus⁵² of Vienna on the Rhone. He was adlected into the senate by Galba and served as urban praetor under Mucianus in 70 CE. Later that same year, after relinquishing the praetorship to Domitian, he campaigned in Gaul against Iulius Civilis, and received the surrender of the Lingones. About 73 CE he was rewarded with his first consulship, and then served as governor of Britain. This was an extraordinarily rapid advance, and it continued to the pro-consulship of Asia. Frontinus is best known for his book, *On Aqueducts*,

⁴⁷ *PIR*² P263.

⁴⁸ *PIR*² A1072.

⁴⁹ *PIR*² A1073.

⁵⁰ Cf. Syme (1985) 595 n. 6 on his origin in Pisaurum.

⁵¹ Syme (1958) 643.

⁵² *PIR*² J322.

in which he drew on his experience as *curator* of aqueducts to which he was appointed by Nerva in 97 CE. (He also wrote a *Strategemata* and a book on land surveying.) His career ended in a blaze of glory, serving his second suffect consulship in 98 CE and a third ordinary consulship with Trajan in 100. He was highly praised both by Tacitus (*Agr.* 17) and Pliny (*Ep.* 5.1.5; the latter called him one of the two most distinguished men in Rome. We do not know how Frontinus first came to the attention of Galba, though perhaps he was one of the Gallic disciples of Corbulo.⁵³ He probably avoided the enmity of Domitian by writing of his book on military strategy and therein praising the emperor's German campaigns.

L. Ceionius Commodus⁵⁴ from Etruria was adlected into the patricians by Vespasian and given a priesthood. Though his activities during the civil war are uncertain, these honours and especially the ordinary consulship of 78 CE makes it likely that he was an early supporter of the Flavians. Though he was the first in his family to reach the consulship, he launched an impressive dynasty with his son of the same name,⁵⁵ consul in 106 CE and his grandson consul in 136. This last⁵⁶ was adopted by Hadrian as L. Aelius Caesar, but he died on 1 January 138 CE several months before the emperor. L. Aurelius Verus (Commodus), the great-grandson of the consul of 78 CE, became joint-emperor with Marcus Aurelius on the death of Antoninus in 161. They ruled collaboratively for eight years until Verus suddenly died of the plague. Marcus had given his son, born in 161 CE, the cognomen of Commodus in tribute to his comrade on the imperial throne.

Though G. (Calpetanus Rantius Quirinalis) Valerius Festus⁵⁷ was a relative of Vitellius and publicly supported Vitellius in his position as legate of the African army, he was careful to establish secret contacts with Vespasian (*Tac. Hist.* 2.98).⁵⁸ Vespasian handsomely rewarded Festus with the suffect consulship of 71 CE, priesthoods, and successive governorships of Pannonia and Hispania Citerior.⁵⁹ Festus guarded

⁵³ Syme (1958) 790.

⁵⁴ *PIR*² C603.

⁵⁵ *PIR*² C604.

⁵⁶ *PIR*² C605.

⁵⁷ *PIR*¹ C184.

⁵⁸ Cf. Nicols (1978) 151–2 on Festus.

⁵⁹ The career is recorded in *CIL* 5.531 at Tergeste (Trieste), of which Festus was patron.

his options, but he threw his support to Vespasian in time to profit from his shameless opportunism.

L. Mestrius Florus⁶⁰ is best known for his friendship with the Greek biographer Plutarch who took Mestrius' name when he became a Roman citizen. Plutarch (*Otho* 14) mentions him as his source for the battle of Bedriacum, where Mestrius fought with Otho. Suetonius portrays him as being on friendly terms with Vespasian, though there is no record of his activities during the civil war (*Vesp.* 22). Suffect consul about 72 CE,⁶¹ he later held the distinguished post of proconsul of Asia under Domitian. L. Acilius Strabo⁶² was another man who reached the consulship as a result of unknown support for the Flavian cause. He had served in Cyprus under Claudius but, after an accusation of extortion in 59 CE, his career went no further despite his acquittal by Nero (*Tac. Ann.* 14.18). After serving as suffect consul in September of 71 CE, he was dispatched as governor of Lower Germany in 72. Here again is a marginal figure who rescued his career by giving early support to the Flavian party.

Ti. Plautius Silvanus Aelianus⁶³ was adopted into the *gens Plautia*, whose members were early supporters of the Flavians. He was legionary commander of *V Alauda* on the Rhine in Caligula's German war, and accompanied Claudius to Britain. During those campaigns he would have become closely acquainted with Vespasian and Sabinus. He held a suffect consulship in 45 CE and was proconsul of Asia in 55. Though sent to Moesia as governor 60–67 CE to replace Sabinus, he was recalled by Nero who was at that time suspicious of his generals with distinguished families. He had the Flavian's trust, for in 70 he was the pontifex entrusted with the rebuilding of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and he was soon sent to Spain as governor. He was granted a second consulship in 74 CE and was thereafter named prefect of the city. He was even given much delayed triumphal regalia for his service in Moesia. His descendants reached the imperial throne. His son was suffect consul in 80 CE and his granddaughter Plautia, by her husband Ceionius Commodus, was mother of Aelius Caesar and grandmother of the emperor Lucius Verus.

⁶⁰ *PIR*² M531.

⁶¹ Syme (1958) 504 n. 3.

⁶² *PIR*² A82.

⁶³ *PIR*² P480.

Eastern Commanders

Vespasian had his greatest success as a commander in Syria and Judaea, so he unsurprisingly drew on other commanders from the East for the future military leadership. The most important of Vespasian's comrades was G. Licinius Mucianus,⁶⁴ who had served under Corbulo in 58 CE as governor of Lycia-Pamphylia, and also served in Armenia (Plin. *HN* 5.83). He returned to Rome as suffect consul about 64 CE and was then dispatched by Nero in 66 to be governor of Syria. After some initial distrust, Mucianus never wavered in his loyalty to the Flavian cause. He led the Flavian forces from the East through Asia Minor and along the Danube where he defeated the invading Sarmatians for which he was later given the triumphal regalia (Tac. *Hist.* 4.4).

After he led the triumphant Flavian army into Rome, Mucianus held his second suffect consulship in 70 CE and exercised *de facto* imperial power for seven months until the emperor reached the capital. He managed not only to establish order in Rome, but brought the impetuous Antonius Primus under control and kept young Domitian from acting in a provocative manner. Vespasian must have been well aware of the extent of his debt to Mucianus, for he gave him a third consulship in 72 CE—only the third commoner (with Agrippa in 27 BCE and L. Vitellius in 47 CE) to hold that honour since Actium. In addition to his political and military achievements, he was a prolific author used by Pliny in the *Naturalis Historia*. Tacitus admired Mucianus' public accomplishments, though he drops many slurs against his private behaviour (*Hist.* 1.10). There was indeed much to admire in a man who did so much to ease the path to power for the Flavians. He was dead by 77 CE.

Another important supporter was the Gallic senator Gn. Iulius Agricola,⁶⁵ quaestor in Asia about 64 CE, and then praetor in 68 who served under Mucianus during the civil war. Agricola was born in Forum Iulii in 40 CE and made a politically useful marriage to the daughter of a senator from Narbo.⁶⁶ His mother was killed in 69 CE by rampaging Othonian sailors. From 70 to 73 CE he served as legionary commander of *XX Valeria Victrix* in Britain, and was

⁶⁴ *PIR*² L216.

⁶⁵ *PIR*² J126.

⁶⁶ Cf. Tac. *Agr.* for the details; also cf. Syme (1958) 19–29.

further honoured by Vespasian by being enrolled among the patricians. After a term as governor of Aquitania, he served as suffect consul in 77 CE and soon thereafter married his daughter to another ambitious young Gaul, the future historian Cornelius Tacitus. In 78 CE Vespasian then sent this highly valued general as governor of Britain where he served for seven years. He led an expedition into Scotland and defeated Calgacus at Mons Graupius in 83 CE. Domitian honoured him with a statue and the *ornamenta triumphalia*. He became well aware of Domitian's suspicion, so he withdrew from public life and, under imperial pressure, even declined to be considered for the proconsulships of Asia or Africa. Thus one of Vespasian's early supporters and valued generals was driven from public life by his increasingly paranoid son.

Several eastern commanders whose families came from the western provinces are more important for their descendants who became emperors in the second century. The Gaul T. Aurelius Fulvus⁶⁷ of Nemausus served as praetorian legate under Corbulo commanding the *III Gallica* in Armenia and later served as its legate at its new post in Moesia.⁶⁸ There he was given the consular regalia by Otho for his campaign against the Rhoxolani in 69 CE (Tac. *Hist.* 1.79). He returned to the East to fight with Vespasian and was quickly rewarded with the suffect consulship of 70 CE.⁶⁹ He later was governor of Hispania Citerior before being honoured by Domitian with a second consulship in 85 CE and the urban prefecture. The family was by that time well established. His son of the same name⁷⁰ soon became consul ordinarius for 89 and his grandson was consul in 120 CE before his adoption by Hadrian in 138. He ruled for twenty three years as Antoninus Pius.

M. Ulpius Trajanus⁷¹ from Italica in Spain came to Rome under Nero and served under Vespasian in Judaea as legate of *X Fretensis*. He was quickly rewarded for his support with the suffect consulship of 70 CE and the governorship of Baetica in 72. He was adlected into the patriciate before serving as governor of Syria (73–77 CE) and the prestigious proconsulship of Asia in 79. His son⁷² served as

⁶⁷ *PIR*² A1510.

⁶⁸ Syme (1958) 605.

⁶⁹ Cf. Syme (1985) 167 n. 7 on his return to the East.

⁷⁰ *PIR*² A1509.

⁷¹ *PIR*¹ U574.

⁷² *PIR*¹ U575.

consul ordinarius in 91 CE before being adopted as Nerva's son and heir in 97. He ruled as emperor 98–117 CE.

S. Vettulenus Cerialis,⁷³ from Reate in Sabine country, presumably through local connections fought with Vespasian in the Jewish campaign. Josephus (*Bj* 6.237) reports that Cerialis was legate of *V Macedonia* and was left as governor of Judaea by Titus after fall of Jerusalem. He reached the suffect consulship in 73 CE before being sent as governor to Moesia for 74–79. His brother G. Vettulenus Civica Cerialis,⁷⁴ also the beneficiary of Flavian patronage, held the suffect consulship about 76 CE before succeeding his brother in Moesia in 81–84. Though he reached the proconsulship of Asia in 88 CE, Civica was killed by Domitian during his year in office. These intertwined careers demonstrate the success that could be achieved by local Sabine adherents of the Flavians; their family was adlected as patricians and, through some unclear connections, they were even claimed as ancestors by Antoninus Pius.⁷⁵

Another political dynasty owing much to the Flavians was the family of M. (Hirrius Fronto) Neratius Pansa,⁷⁶ Italians from Saepinum. Pansa's career is detailed in an inscription from his hometown that shows that he was adlected among the patricians and granted the *dona militaria*.⁷⁷ He probably gained these honours for his command in 69 CE of *VI Ferrata*, which he led from Syria to Moesia. Vespasian continued to use him, first sending him to Lycia as governor for two years (70–72 CE) and then making him suffect consul for 73. Pansa then returned to the East as governor of Galatia-Cappadocia from 77 to 80 CE.

Not only was Pansa's career remarkably successful, but it paved the way for his brother L. Neratius Priscus⁷⁸ (consul 87 CE), adopted son L. Neratius Marcellus⁷⁹ (consul 95 CE), and nephew the great jurist L. Neratius Priscus⁸⁰ (consul 97 CE) to follow him to suffect consulships and his grandson to the ordinary consulship of 121 CE. The younger Priscus were even thought by some to be a possible

⁷³ *PIR*¹ V351.

⁷⁴ *PIR*¹ V351.

⁷⁵ Cf. Nicols (1978) 103; Syme (1958) 595 n. 6; Eck (1970).

⁷⁶ *PIR*² N56.

⁷⁷ Torelli (1968) 170–5; also cf. long entry in *PIR*² N56.

⁷⁸ *PIR*² N59.

⁷⁹ *PIR*² N55.

⁸⁰ *PIR*² N60.

successor of his friend Trajan.⁸¹ This remarkable ascent seems to have been largely due to Pansa's early service on the eastern front.

L. Nonius Calpurnius Asprenas⁸² was a survivor of an enormously distinguished family; his father (consul 29 CE), uncle (consul 38 CE), grandfather (consul 6 CE), and great-great grandfather (consul 36 BCE) had all been consuls. Perhaps for that reason he was not given a senior post until Galba sent him as governor of Galacia-Pamphylia in 68 CE (Tac. *Hist.* 2.9). He supported Vespasian and remained in Galatia until 70 CE and soon after he became suffect consul (c. 72). In 82–83 CE he was proconsul of Africa.

Another trusted Flavian supporter was Gn. Pompeius Collega,⁸³ legionary legate of *IV Scythica*, who acted as governor of Syria between the departure of Mucianus to the arrival of Caesennius Paetus (Joseph. *Bj* 7.58–9). On his return to Rome, he was suffect consul in November of 71 CE before being dispatched as governor of Galatia-Cappadocia for four years (73–77 CE).⁸⁴ His son, Sex. Pompeius Collega,⁸⁵ was consul ordinarius of 93 CE.

G. (Iulius Cordinus) G. Rutilius Gallicus,⁸⁶ born in Turin, held various eastern positions before becoming praetorian governor of Galatia in the 60s CE (Stat. *Silv.* 1.4). He served under the overall jurisdiction of Corbulo and, as a legate in Asia between 68 and 70 CE, he offered early support to the Flavians.⁸⁷ He was quickly rewarded with a priesthood and the suffect consulship for 71 or 72 CE. After serving as a special legate in Africa for establishing the census and boundaries, Gallicus became governor of Lower Germany (76–78 CE). He served as prefect of the city while Domitian was on the Danube in the late 80s CE and was granted a second consulship in 87. This multi-faceted supporter of the regime died in 92 CE.

Other eastern commanders were slower to rise to the consulship. In the case of A. Caesennius Gallus,⁸⁸ legionary commander of *XII Fulminata*, it may have been his disastrous defeat by the Jews in 66 CE as recorded by Josephus (*Bj* 2.510–13). Gallus' priesthood and

⁸¹ Syme (1958) 233, 486.

⁸² *PIR*² N132.

⁸³ *PIR*² P600.

⁸⁴ Eck (1970) 239.

⁸⁵ *PIR*² P601.

⁸⁶ *PIR*¹ R167.

⁸⁷ Nicols (1978) 122.

⁸⁸ *PIR*² C170.

consulship late in Vespasian's reign are only known from honorific inscriptions from Asia Minor, where he served as governor of Cappadocia-Galatia from 80 to 83 CE.⁸⁹ Whatever the reason Gallus that did not reach the consulship earlier, he was certainly trusted both by Vespasian and Domitian.

The final protégé of Corbulo was L. Funisculanus Vettonianus,⁹⁰ who commanded the *IV Scythica*. Though he would likely have been an early Flavian supporter, he only held a minor office under Vespasian. Then, after a suffect consulship about 78 CE, he was given a series of important governorships along the turbulent Danube frontier: Dalmatia (79–82 CE), Pannonia (82–86 CE), and newly created Moesia Superior (86–88 CE). Vettonianus seems to have been regarded as a Danube specialist and brought out of virtual retirement. He was rewarded for his service with the proconsulship of Africa about 91–92 CE. We cannot explain his exclusion from office, but it is notable that his talents were not forgotten.

Danubian Legates

Ronald Syme has pointed out that Tacitus did not devote much attention to the Danubian armies during the civil war of 69 CE.⁹¹ The historian did understand the crucial role of *legio III Gallica*, which had moved from Syria to Moesia and remained loyal to Vespasian.⁹² Its early support emboldened Vespasian to seek the throne and to invade Italy by way of the Balkans. Both Tacitus (*Hist.* 2, 85, 96) and Suetonius (*Vesp.* 6) make it clear that the soldiers, rather than the commanders, drove the pro-Flavian rebellion against Vitellius. Unsurprisingly, fewer Danubian legates had brilliant careers under Flavian rule following the civil war than the eastern commanders.

The remarkable exception was G. Dillius Aponianus⁹³ from Cordoba, who had served as quaestor of Sicily under Nero. He was in the key post of legionary commander of *III Gallica*, which he led into Italy and at Cremona (*Tac. Hist.* 3.10). He was quickly rewarded with a suffect consulship between 71 and 73 CE, with the curatorship

⁸⁹ *ILS* 263, 268.

⁹⁰ *PIR*² F570.

⁹¹ Syme (1958) 167.

⁹² Nicols (1978) 132.

⁹³ *PIR*² D89.

of the Tiber banks soon thereafter. For a previously undistinguished provincial it was a very rapid rise.

Politically Distinguished Senators

The final group of senators who reached high office under the Flavians were those who might today be described as 'political insiders.' Some had money, others had charm, and nearly all had oratorical ability. They knew how the Roman political system worked in good times and bad. A man like Q. Vibius Crispus⁹⁴ was the quintessential survivor who, from his birth in 13 CE to his death in 93 CE, had lived under eleven of Suetonius' twelve Caesars. Syme described him as 'bland, graceful, and humorous,' and both Quintilian (*Inst.* 5.13.48) and Suetonius (*Dom.* 3) comment on his witticisms.⁹⁵ While Tacitus praises Crispus and his friend Eprius Marcellus for their oratorical skill and the wealth they gained from it (*Dial.* 8, 13), they were also feared as *delatores* whom Tacitus would rank 'with the notable rather than the good' (*inter claros magis quam inter bonos*, *Hist.* 2.10). He had held the suffect consulship in 61 CE and was the *curator* of aqueducts during the civil war. Despite no evidence of support for the Flavians, he was proconsul of Africa in 72–73 CE and again consul about 74. He remained important until his death, serving as governor in Spain and even being honoured with an extraordinary third consulship about 82 CE. His name occurs in Martial, Juvenal, Statius, as well as other contemporaries like the elder Pliny and Quintilian. He was at the centre of political life and was, one might say, co-opted by the Flavians.

Crispus was often paired with T. (Clodius) Eprius Marcellus.⁹⁶ Marcellus served as governor of Lycia where the provincials unsuccessfully accused him of corruption in 57–58 CE. Soon afterward Nero gave him his first consulship, and he repaid the emperor by bringing a prosecution against the Stoic philosopher Thrasea Paetus. Like Crispus, he was well known to Flavian literary world and Columella dedicated his agricultural textbook to him. Despite his lack of military support for the Flavians in the civil wars, Marcellus made himself immediately useful by tangling with the spiteful Helvidius

⁹⁴ *PIR*¹ V379.

⁹⁵ Syme (1958) 4, 101.

⁹⁶ *PIR*² E84.

Priscus over the composition of the senatorial delegation to acclaim Vespasian as emperor where he fiercely counterattacked the self-righteous pose of that angry philosopher (Tac. *Hist.* 4.6–8). He then served as proconsul of Asia for three years (70–73 CE). His second suffect consulship in 74 shows the friendship he had established with Vespasian. Despite that friendship, he joined in a conspiracy with Caecina in 79 CE and was condemned to commit suicide (Cass. Dio 65.16).

The third senator of considerable rhetorical skill, with a reputation for unsavoury accusations, was A. (Didius Gallus) Fabricius Veiento.⁹⁷ Veiento first emerged under Nero as the praetor who, trying to deal with the arrogant horse-trainers and charioteers, had dogs trained to compete in place of horses (Cass. Dio 61.6). Despite such ingenuity, he later fell out of favour after being accused of slandering senators in his writings (*Ann.* 14.50). He was personally exiled by Nero and his books were ordered to be burnt. He probably remained in exile until Vespasian made him suffect consul early in his reign. Though there is no clear mention of the second consulship, Veiento's third took place under Domitian, probably before 83 CE. He was a *comes* of Domitian during the German war and seems to have remained in favour to the very end, prosecuting many through his denunciations (*Epit. de Caes.* 12.5). Pliny depicts Veiento ingratiating himself with Nerva while dining (*Ep.* 4.21.4), and being shouted down in the senate when he tried to rebut Pliny's own attack on the prosecutor of Helvidius (*Ep.* 9, 13, 19). Like Crispus and Marcellus, a morally unpleasant man but entertaining and useful to emperors.

Another well-connected senator was L. Valerius Catullus Messalinus,⁹⁸ whose high birth brought him into the Julio-Claudian court as one of those 'smooth and acceptable persons'.⁹⁹ Though acceptable, Messalinus was widely distrusted and Juvenal calls him hateful (*Sat.* 4.113). He was consul ordinarius in 73 CE with Domitian, and later served on that emperor's consilium. He received, remarkably, a second ordinary consulship in 85 CE and was particularly feared under Domitian. But there is no evidence for Marcellinus early support for the Flavians in the civil war; he was taken up by the dynasty as a useful ally.

⁹⁷ A. Fabricius Veiento: *PIR*² F91; see Syme (1958) 4–5.

⁹⁸ *PIR*¹ V41.

⁹⁹ Syme (1958) 594.

Two rich old men to whom the Flavians made overtures were M. Pompeius Silvanus¹⁰⁰ and L. Tampilus Flavianus,¹⁰¹ who had served together as suffect consuls about 46 CE and separately as proconsuls of Africa (Tac. *Hist.* 2.86). Both were sent by Nero as governors in Danubian provinces, and neither made any early move to support Vespasian. Silvanus in Dalmatia was so slow to act during 69 CE that Annius Bassus took effective command (*Hist.* 3.50). Flavianus was co-opted into the Arval brotherhood by Otho and remained in office under Vitellius. He was suspected of treason by his own troops and his life was only saved by the prompt action of Antonius Primus and a letter from Vespasian. Despite their procrastination, after the Flavian victory both were jointly named *curatores* of aqueducts for two years and then were (again jointly) granted a second suffect consulship about 76 CE. Silvanus was even designated for a third suffect consulship in 82 CE but he died before holding it. These men were not being rewarded for their actions, but bound to the Flavian camp for their influence.

M. Cocceius Nerva¹⁰² had a family whose importance could be traced back to the consul¹⁰³ of 36 BCE.¹⁰⁴ His grandfather was a friend of Tiberius and a great jurist. Nerva's greatest asset was his caution. Though there is no evidence of military experience, Nero gave him triumphal regalia for his loyalty during the Pisonian conspiracy. It is a mystery why he was chosen by Vespasian for the signal honour of serving as ordinary consul for 71 CE together with the emperor. He served yet another ordinary consulship with Domitian in 90 CE. He was probably deeply implicated in the murder of Domitian, and surely reached the throne as a compromise candidate. Nevertheless, Nerva avoided the mistake of Galba; he adopted as his heir the empire's most effective general, Trajan, who also owed his career to Flavian patronage.

One final example may show Vespasian's early attempt to assuage, or at least neutralise, the Stoic opposition. G. Caecina Paetus,¹⁰⁵ the brother-in-law of Thrasea Paetus, was named suffect consul in Novem-

¹⁰⁰ *PIR*² P654.

¹⁰¹ *PIR*¹ T5.

¹⁰² *PIR*² C1227.

¹⁰³ *PIR*² C1224.

¹⁰⁴ Syme (1958) 1-9, 627-8 (Appendix 1: 'The Kinsmen of Nerva').

¹⁰⁵ *PIR*² C104.

ber of 70 CE. Later in the reign of Vespasian or Titus he served as proconsul of Asia. He neither fell out of favour with the Flavians, nor did he help them in their uneasy relations with the Stoic opposition.

Used and Discarded

Civil wars often produce figures who are necessary for a party's victory, but who later become threats, embarrassments, or convenient scapegoats. Hence, after modern revolutions, we have seen Hitler's destruction of the Sturm-Abteilung and Stalin's purges of old Bolsheviks. The two most energetic military leaders for the Flavians were also sacrificed to ensure a smooth transition to power. Here too, Flavian sources are particularly suspect. M. Antonius Primus¹⁰⁶ of Tolosa in Aquitanian Gaul, convicted in 61 CE of forgery was only recalled to the senate by Galba who made him legate of *VIII Galbiana* in Pannonia. This charismatic soldier is depicted in the sources as the most bellicose of the Flavian supporters (Tac. *Hist.* 3.2–3).

While the sources allege Vespasian was hoping Vitellius would surrender without the necessity of ravaging Italy, Antonius plunged ahead and gave his troops leave to pillage Cremona. Given the later revulsion to the sack of Cremona, we can see how convenient a scapegoat Antonius was. The shrewd Mucianus saw the opportunity and also quietly blamed Antonius for the delay that cost Flavius Sabinus his life. Antonius was a loose cannon, and Tacitus recognised that he was a good man to have at one's side in war but a dangerous one in peacetime (*Hist.* 2.86).¹⁰⁷ This was the Flavian line, also promoted by Josephus (*BJ* 4.642) and the elder Pliny (Tac. *Hist.* 3.28). Mucianus later sent many of Antonius' Danubian soldiers to Germany, and kept him from ingratiating himself with Domitian. Though Vespasian ostensibly remained friendly, Mucianus had won the power struggle and Antonius withdrew to spend his remaining twenty-five years in retirement in Tolosa. He served the Flavians well in war and even better by quietly withdrawing in peace.

His close ally in the invasion of Italy was Arrius Varus,¹⁰⁸ prefect of a cohort under Corbulo in 45 CE and then became *primus pilus*

¹⁰⁶ *PIR*² A866.

¹⁰⁷ Nicols (1978) 141–5.

¹⁰⁸ *PIR*² A1111.

of *leg. III Gallica* before being a cavalry commander in Pannonia. There this long-serving, but humble, soldier threw in his lot with Antonius Primus and succeeded brilliantly. He fought at Cremona and, after the conquest of Rome, he was named praetorian prefect. Tacitus repeatedly links him with Primus as the men whom Mucianus feared (*Hist.* 4.11, 39, 68). The *legio III Gallica* was reassigned to Syria and Varus, who by this time was also a friend of Domitian, was quietly moved from the praetorians to the prefecture of the grain supply.

One can only admire the subtle effectiveness with which Mucianus dealt with the aftermath of victory. He ensured that Primus and Varus would not disrupt the transition, and kept Domitian under control. Primus and Varus went quietly, either because they were indeed honourable men and devoted supporters of Vespasian or because Mucianus had boxed them in. One can suggest that Vespasian would no more have secured power without Mucianus than Augustus would have without Agrippa. Of course, one quality of political leadership is to attract followers of that quality.

Conclusions

It is clear that the most favoured section of the Flavian party were the praetorians serving in the eastern legions. They were quickly advanced to consulships and their families often retained office for generations. Many of these men had their origins in Gaul and Spain and through their advancement the path to power was open to their descendants like Trajan, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, and Lucius Verus. More surprisingly, Vespasian also relied heavily a group of senatorial insiders who had not openly supported him during the civil war. These were men he needed to insure the support of the existing power structure.

There were relatively few Flavian relatives to profit from Vespasian, which perhaps explains the opportunities open to a range of new men. Nor were there many early Flavian supporters in Rome or the West. Even the decisive Danubian legions provided few praetorians who were quickly advanced. They had dallied until the foot soldiers forced them to declare for Vespasian; he did not need them later.

Of course this survey only examines the first group of Flavian consulars (70–79 CE). Those who reached the consulship under Domi-

tian (M. Annius Verus, the emperor Trajan: 91 CE) or later (Tacitus: 97 CE, Pliny: 100 CE) had begun their careers under Vespasian and had profited from his patronage. Verus is a good example: his Spanish father reached the praetorship, but Verus was adlected into the patriciate under Vespasian and served his first consulship under Domitian. He held two more consulships under Hadrian; his grandson was the emperor Marcus Aurelius. In addition, there were soldiers and local nobles whom Vespasian brought into the equestrian order but would only see their families reach higher office under the Antonines.

But this social and political mobility did pose a serious danger to the regime. The year 69 CE had taught that blood did not determine the outcome of civil war; if it had, Galba and Piso would have rebuffed all challengers. The Julio-Claudians needed only worry about rivals from old aristocratic families; Sejanus was a bizarre aberration. But the Flavians understood that rivals might come from anywhere in the new aristocracy they were creating. Vespasian had Caecina's conspiracy of 79 CE and Domitian had Saturninus' in 89. So Domitian feared, and perhaps murdered, his general Agricola, whose origins in southern Gaul were hardly distinguished. And, in a certain sense, Domitian was correct, since an heir of that new administrative elite in the person of Trajan was to reach power in 97 CE—sooner than most would have thought possible. The creation of that new aristocracy of power was the most important and long-lasting contribution of the Flavian era.

3. CONQUERORS AND CONQUERED ON FLAVIAN COINS

Jane M. Cody

When the first Flavian emperor came to power in 69 CE, the Romans had been minting coins for over three and a half centuries. From the earliest issues in the fourth century BCE the designs of these coins provide insight into the values of the society that produced them. By the Flavian period there was a vast repertory of coin designs, many of them still in circulation. The manner in which the new emperors adopted—and adapted—these designs is an important primary source for understanding the ideology of the period. This chapter examines one important aspect of the Flavian coinage, the representations of foreign peoples and places, in order to better understand how these rulers appropriated and manipulated the earlier numismatic tradition.¹ This understanding should, in turn, bring us closer to a comprehension of how these emperors viewed themselves in relation both to Romans who came before them and to contemporary peoples and places with which they came into contact.

Reflecting the enthusiasm for the restoration of the republic that followed the suicide of Nero in 68 CE, there was a conscious return to republican and Augustan coin types. The coins of Galba, Vitellius, Clodius Macer and, finally, Vespasian all exhibit this trait.² The reason for this is twofold. First, all of these rulers wanted to break with the recent Julio-Claudian past, which in the manner they presented it was deeply marred by persecution and tyrannical behaviour on the part of the ruler. Secondly, these emperors came to power as the direct result not of adoption but of military success. Quite naturally, they found models for themselves in the great commanders of an earlier era. On coins of Marius, Sulla, Pompey, Caesar and Octavian-Augustus, whose power also had been based on leadership of the army, the emperors of 68–69 CE, including Vespasian,

¹ The previous bibliography is extensive. See especially Toynbee (1934), Calo Levi (1952) and Methy (1992) 267–89.

² Otho is, of course, an exception.

found a visual language suitable for the representation of their own power. To understand how the Flavian rulers employed these earlier coin designs, we must briefly review each of them in its own historical context.

When the Romans first issued coins in the late fourth century BCE, they produced types similar to those of the Greek cities of South Italy from which they adopted both the idea of circular coins and the style and content of the designs that they engraved to decorate them. Greek coin designs acted primarily as badges of cities and their ruling families. Abbreviated forms of other magistrates' names might appear on the coins but did not affect the types themselves. There were few types and they changed rarely. Likewise, the early Roman types were state-oriented and changed infrequently. Among the early types were military designs, including allusions to the relations of Rome with her neighbours and the making of both war and peace.

As was often true of the Roman adoption of things foreign, the period of assimilation was followed by an age of innovation and experimentation. In the case of coins, the innovation and experimentation were concentrated in the third quarter of the second century BCE. The results were twofold. First, Roman types issued at this time and later changed annually with the tenure of the officials in charge of minting them. Secondly, as time went by, more and more types alluded to great deeds of the mint officials, their political leaders or their ancestors, rather than to the Roman state *per se*. As Roman territory expanded in the republican period, the range of foreign and provincial relationships also expanded, as did the number of neighbours involved. Coin types alluding to both new and older territorial acquisitions of the Romans became common.

In the mid-forties BCE Julius Caesar consolidated his power as consul and dictator with the power of the officials to produce a Roman coinage that over a period of several years equated his own deeds with the glory of Rome. That period was rich with types that alluded to the conquest of Gaul. After the death of Caesar, numerous followers of Pompey, Brutus and Cassius and the second triumvirate also alluded on their coins to the territories and provinces held by their forces. Such types continued into the years of Augustus' reign.

Republican and Augustan coin designs portraying conquered foreign peoples comprise four distinct iconographic groups that, taken together, constitute an artistic language in which the Romans of this period represented their relationships with these peoples. The groups

represent the conquered at significant stages along a continuum from a totally abject condition to a state of near equality. At one end are the *prouincia capta* ('captured province') types, on which the conquered appears mourning or with the bound hands of a prisoner. Next are the *supplicatio* ('supplication') and *adoratio* ('adoration') types, on which the provincial interacts with Rome to sue for favour. Further along the continuum are *prouincia restituta* ('restored province') types,³ where the provincial is raised from a kneeling to a standing position by a representative of Rome. At the other end are the *prouincia fidelis* ('faithful province') types on which a provincial stands literally or figuratively next to, and often interacts on nearly equal footing with, a representative of Rome. Each of these four republican and Augustan compositions recurs on the coins of the Flavian emperors.⁴

Capta Types

The term *capta*, taken from the inscription IUDAEA CAPTA that accompanies some of the types of this group, applies to a number of designs on which the provincial is represented as utterly defeated and the conqueror as all powerful. By far the most numerous of the *capta* types in the republican/Augustan and the Flavian periods depicts prisoners mourning or with hands bound. The captives kneel, sit or stand, and are naked, partially or fully dressed beneath a trophy, a post-like structure decorated with the armour and weapons of the conquered people.⁵ The scene is one of complete dejection.

The scenes in which the captives appear originate in the Hellenistic tradition for the representation of defeated barbarian warriors, especially Gauls, who are distinguished by their outward appearance as noble fighters, but un-Greek and thus uncivilised.⁶ In the same way, the Roman types represent conquered peoples of un-Romanised areas on the margins of the empire, where neither Greek nor Roman civilisation had made significant inroads. In the republican period, a single male Gallic or Spanish captive is portrayed kneeling or sitting,

³ The types are defined by Brilliant (1963) 18, 70–2. Kuttner (1995) *passim* uses the term *submissio* of a related group of images.

⁴ See Methy (1992) 268 n. 4 for bibliography on categories previously established for these types.

⁵ This group is described fully by Methy (1992) 267–89.

⁶ *EAA* 1.975 s.v. 'Barbari'.

bearded and naked, beneath the trophy.⁷ The earliest of these types (*RRC* 326.2), issued *circa* 101 BCE to celebrate the victories of Marius, is a naked male Gaul kneeling. On coins issued in Spain by Carisius, a legate under Augustus in 25–23 BCE, a captive Spaniard from one of the north-western tribes that remained unsubdued until this period, also kneels (*BMC* 1.53 no. 287). On Caesarian coins, a naked Gaul sits cross-legged below the trophy (*RRC* 452.4–5). On another Caesarian version of the *capta* theme, two Gauls sit back to back, a naked male figure to the left, facing outward, opposite a loosely draped female with one knee raised and her head resting on her hand in the ancient position of mourning (*RRC* 468.1–2).⁸ Enlarged versions of the heads of both Spanish and Gallic captives with shaggy hair appear on coin types that allude to the advances of Postumius Albinus into unconquered areas of Spain in the early second century BCE (*RRC* 372.2) and to Caesar's advances into Gaul in the late fifties and early forties BCE (*RRC* 448.2–3).⁹

The portrait of the conquered Greek king Perseus standing beneath a trophy on an issue of 62 BCE (*RRC* 415.1) presents a singular and remarkable contrast to these barbarian figures. On these coins Perseus and his two sons, in Greco-Roman civilian dress, stand to one side of a trophy while to the other stands their Roman master (Aemilius Paullus) clothed similarly in civilian garb. The trophy and the larger size of the Roman indicate his mastery over the other figures, but similarity in the dress of the figures and the Roman's gestures indicate communication between them. The contrast between the portrayal of the Gallic and Spanish captives, on the one hand, and that of the conquered Greek, on the other, serves to illustrate the conceptual divide between the Roman idea of the conquered who are 'civilised', in this case a former Greek king, and those who are 'barbarian', in these cases Gauls and Spaniards.

After the Augustan period, the barbarian *capta* type disappears from the Roman coinage for the remainder of the Julio-Claudian

⁷ The figures on *RRC* 438.1 (standing), *RRC* 503.1 (seated) and *BMC* 1.27 nos 127–30 (kneeling) are not identifiable.

⁸ The male captive at times kneels (*RRC* 468.2). This Caesarian type reappears on very rare *aurei* of Brutus (*RRC* 503.1), although here the figures are dressed and the weapons different. The allusion is uncertain.

⁹ The standing Armenia accompanied by the legend ARMENIA CAPTA on *denarii* of the early Augustan moneyer Florus (*BMC* 1.109 nos 676–8) is a type singular on the coinage but common enough elsewhere.

period. On coins, these emperors validate their power primarily through family connections, especially through their claims as descendants of Augustus.¹⁰ In contrast, the *capta* type reappears in the very first year of Vespasian's rule (69–70 CE), and recurs in numerous variations throughout his reign and the reigns of his two sons, Titus and Domitian. In this period, these emperors adopt and elaborate the types of the republican and Augustan commanders in several significant ways. The most famous of these types is a single female captive Judaeian woman seated to the right, at first beneath a trophy,¹¹ accompanied by the inscription IUDAEA (fig. 1).¹² The woman's position below and to the right of the trophy and her pose as a mourner, one knee raised, her head bent and resting on her hand, is the same as that on the Caesarian type of male and female Gallic prisoners seated back-to-back below the trophy (*RRC* 468.1). On the Vespasianic coin, however, the seated male figure to the left is absent, so that the mourning female figure becomes the focal point of the composition.¹³

There are several variations of this type (see fig. 2). The most significant is a composition on which a palm tree replaces the trophy. The palm previously replaced a trophy on a different type of Vitellius (*BMC* 1.379 nos 61–4) and at first may be a reference to victory as well as, or instead of, a geographical allusion. The type with palm appears on Vespasianic silver and bronze in great numbers in association with the celebration of Vespasian's triumph in June 71 CE.¹⁴ It reappears on a few issues of 72–73 CE and again in 77–78 CE on

¹⁰ *Capta* figures do, of course, appear in other media, most notably on the Gemma Augustea (Andreae [1977] fig. 317). On Augustus' policy in general, see Brunt (1990) 96–109 and Gruen (1990) 395–416.

¹¹ The type with trophy first appears on gold and silver of 69–70 CE: *BMC* 2.5 nos 31–42. The exact chronological relationship of these coins with the less common *BMC* 26–7 nos 43–4, which have a palm instead of the trophy and are also dated by their legend to 69–70 CE, requires further study.

¹² On gold and silver: *BMC* 2.67 no. 348, 70–1 nos 357–9, 74 no. 370. On bronze, beginning in 71 CE: *BMC* 2.115, 131 no. 608.

¹³ Also, a rectangular and round shield replace the long pointed Gallic shields of the Caesarian trophy. On issues of 79 CE and posthumous issues of 80–81 CE, Victoria places a round shield on a trophy below which sits the female captive: *BMC* 2.44 nos 245–8 (of 79 CE); 2.43 nos 112–16 (of 80–81 CE). Compare the reverse of *RRC* 333 for a republican prototype.

¹⁴ For the simplest form of the type: *BMC* 2.6–7 nos 43–4 (undated, attributed to 69–70 CE), 79 no. + and nos 388–91 (undated), 192 no. 791 (of 71 CE), 193 (undated). Kraay (1978) 55 notes the connection with the triumph.



Fig. 2. 1001.1.12936



Fig. 6. 1944.100.42573



Fig. 5. 1001.1.22957



Fig. 4. 1905.57.328



Fig. 1. 1957.172.1563



Fig. 3. 1935.11.372



a large number of bronze coins minted in the name of Vespasian and Titus at Lugdunum, though the reason for the choice of type at this date remains obscure. The type with palm tree appears in several important variations. On the most common the captive figure is seated on and/or surrounded by weapons.¹⁵ On others, a male captive, dressed in a cloak, stands on the side of the palm opposite the female captive.¹⁶ On still other issues, the female figure appears standing alone to the left of the palm¹⁷ or, more commonly, an over-size Roman in military dress looms over the scene in a pose originally belonging to a Hellenistic god (fig. 3).¹⁸

The Jews had been subjects of several Hellenistic kings and had been involved with the Romans since Pompey intervened in their internal affairs in the 60s BCE. On a republican coin of 55 BCE that alludes to this event (*RRC* 431.1), a bearded figure wearing breeches and a cloak kneels in front of a camel flanked by the inscription *JUDAEUS BACCHIUS*. The dress of the figure, like the naked figures of the Jews, Gauls and Spaniards above, marks this Judaeen as coming from outside the boundaries of Greco-Roman civilisation.

Judaea became a Roman province in 6 BCE, and one might well expect that after this date the portrayal of Judaeen Jews would adhere more closely to the types used for provincials of the civilised Greco-Roman world. This is not the case. Rather, these Jews continue to appear as part of compositions reserved for conquered peoples beyond the borders of this world and their dress and pose reinforce this characterisation. The female figure, in mourning or standing with hands bound, recalls other barbarian female types, as does the male, naked but for a cloak. On types where the divine Roman ruler

¹⁵ *BMC* 2.131 nos 604–8, 140 nos 631–2, 142 no. *, 154 no. 672, 192 nos 788–90, 210 no. 845, 213–14 no. 862–5, 222 no. +. It also appears on coins of Titus: *BMC* 2.279 no. 259.

¹⁶ *BMC* 2.115–17 nos. 532–42, 185 nos. 761–4. The standing male captive figure is paralleled on *RRC* 438.1 and the (?) Augustan trophy at St. Bernard de Comminges, where full length male and female captive Gauls stand at the foot of the trophy: Picard (1957) 272 and pl. ix. The male captive also appears on coins of Titus issued under Vespasian: *BMC* 2.256–7 nos 161–70, 294 no. 308.

¹⁷ *BMC* 2.79 nos 388–91 on early coins of Lugdunum.

¹⁸ There is also a quite rare type on the bronze of 71 CE with Victoria inscribing a shield attached to a palm below which a female captive sometimes sits (*BMC* 2.126 nos 582–5, 190–1 nos 783–5 with Kraay [1978] 53, who notes that this is a copy of a Vitellian type).

towers over, but ignores,¹⁹ the Jewish captive,²⁰ the subordination and otherness of the conquered figure and the position of the all-powerful Roman conqueror are further emphasised.

The explanation for the continued portrayal of Judaeans as barbarians is in part due to the fact that the Jews on several occasions under Gaius and Claudius had resisted Roman attempts to institute some of the most important hallmarks of Roman civilisation: its statues, temples and cults—including the imperial cult. Not only that. The Jews had openly rebelled against Rome in 66 CE.²¹ To the Flavian rulers these actions must have marked the Jews as barbarian and rendered them an example of the abject status of those who resisted the progress of Romanisation. Vespasian's designers produced a forceful visual message, one that has struck modern viewers of the coins as sympathetic to the conquered land. But this was not the original intention of the type. Rather, in adopting the compositional scheme and details of the republican and Augustan *capta* types, the designers intended to portray the Judaeans as worthy enemies on the battlefield, but as uncivilised, like Gauls or Spaniards.

Titus continued for a short while to issue the type of IUDAEA CAPTA under a palm tree in celebration of the victory for which he was in large part responsible (*BMC* 2.294 no. 308). He also issued two other *capta* coins in the republican and Augustan tradition. One of these is a revival of the design with a single male captive kneeling at the base of a trophy (*RRC* 326.2; *BMC* 1.53 no. 287); the other is a further variation of the Caesarian type of two captives back-to-back under a trophy that Vespasian's designers had used to celebrate the subjugation of the Jews.

The kneeling captive type occurs on coins issued in the name of Titus in 79, both before and after Vespasian's death.²² Although Titus had been a successful general, he did not take to the field during his two years as emperor (79–81 CE). The most important military campaigns of his short reign were conducted in Britain by Agricola, who had taken command there in 78 CE. The campaigns,

¹⁹ Methy (1992) 270–1 notes this feature.

²⁰ The figure is an adaptation of a popular republican type of the gods Neptune and Mars: *RRC* 335.3, 457.1 (Trinacrus), 494.7–9 (Mars), 511.3 (Neptune); *BMC* 2.12, 14, 107–8, etc. (Neptune).

²¹ For a more thorough explanation and interpretation, see Tac. *Hist.* 5.2–9.

²² *BMC* 2.46 nos 258–9, 223 nos 1–3, 224 no. 5, 226 nos 14–15, 228 nos 30–2.

later abandoned by Domitian, were undertaken enthusiastically by Vespasian and Titus, who had both served with distinction in Britain earlier in their careers (Suet. *Vesp.* 4.1–2; *Tit.* 4.1).

Mattingly (*BMC* 2.xli) interprets the kneeling captive type alternatively as a reference to the victories in Judaea (on the coins of 79 issued while Vespasian was still alive) and to the victories of Agricola in Britain (on coins of 79 after the accession of Titus), but his position is not convincing. The identical composition and detail of the types and the fact that they were issued in the same year, though both before and after Vespasian's death, indicates that they refer to the same event.

It seems unlikely that the coins refer to the campaigns in Judaea. The design of the trophy is different from the trophy on the IUDAEA CAPTA coinage. These new types have a helmet and cuirass, crossed spears on the left and a round shield on the right, instead of the oblong and round shields on an undecorated stem of the IUDAEA CAPTA coins.²³ It is far more probable that the coin engravers designed both types to celebrate Agricola's successes in Britain. In this case, the design of the armour decorating the trophy is easily explicable, since the round shield is found in connection with British campaigns on the trophies atop the triumphal arch DE BRITANN(IS) on Claudius' coins (*BMC* 1.168–71) and the typically Celtic oblong shield with which it is combined can be posited to reflect the common Roman (mis)identification of Britons and Celts (e.g., Tac. *Agr.* 11). That the type was issued both before and after Vespasian's death and Titus' accession merely alludes to Titus' support of the campaign under his father's authority and to his own endorsement of Agricola's command once he himself became emperor.

Titus' third *capta* type, with male and female prisoners seated back-to-back under the trophy, is very similar to Caesar's type and to Vespasian's IUDAEA CAPTA coins with this design, except that the position of the two figures is reversed and the shields of the trophy

²³ Sometimes a sword (*parazonium*) also appears on the right. There are similar weapons (round shields and crossed spears on a rare bronze coin of Vespasian (*BMC* 2.135 no. +; Giard [1998] pl. L11 no. 599). In the composition of the type and the design of the trophy, Titus' types are similar to the coins of the Augustan legate Carisius, which refer to his campaigns in Spain. A *capta* type that refers to this area is unlikely on Titus' coins. There are no known victories in this area, and Vespasian had extended Latin rights and, thus, Roman civilisation to even the most primitive peoples of Spain.

are Celtic rather than Judaeian in form (*BMC* 2.230 nos 36–41). Mattingly postulates that this type also alludes to Agricola's victories in Britain (*BMC* 2.xxii), an identification supported by the Celtic shape of the shield and its appearance on the other (British) *capta* types of Titus.

Domitian succeeded his elder brother Titus in 81 CE. Excluded from the glorious military accomplishments of his father and brother, the new ruler was anxious to prove himself their equal or better in this arena. In 82 CE Domitian went north to join in the battle against the Chatti along the Rhine and in 83 he assumed the title Germanicus. In 85 CE he extended the frontier along the upper Rhine. Domitian's first *capta* types appear on the precious metal coinage in 83 CE in celebration of his victories there.²⁴ Three of these designs are straightforward adaptations of the republican and Augustan designs already used by his father and brother. One is a composition on bronze *dupondii* issued in 85 CE that has back-to-back German captives seated beneath a trophy decorated with a pair of long rounded German shields, rather than the Gallic and Jewish weapons of Domitian's predecessors (*BMC* 2.366 no. 310).²⁵ The second *capta* type, on *sestertii* of 85 and 87 CE, is a standing male and seated female captive below a trophy decorated with German arms and accompanied by the inscription GERMANIA CAPTA (*BMC* 2.362 no. 294, 385 no. 395; fig. 4). The type is a simple adaptation of one of his father's coins discussed above. On the third type, of 85–86 CE, Victoria inscribes a shield with DE GER(MANIS) (*BMC* 2.370 nos 330–1, 380 nos 374–5) while a female captive sits below. This is, again, an old republican type, previously adapted by Vespasian (*BMC* 2.126 nos 582–5).²⁶ However, on Domitian's coins, a German trophy is substituted for the palm tree, below which the mourning female captive sits, and the new inscription on the shield takes the place of Vespasian's OB CIVES SER(VATOS).²⁷

On a far more novel Domitianic type,²⁸ which appears on the

²⁴ Other sources mock his supposed victories: Tac. *Agr.* 39.1–2; Cass. Dio 67.4.1, 6.3–4.

²⁵ They are identical to those on Titus' earlier coins of this type.

²⁶ See above, n. 18.

²⁷ *BMC* 2.125–6 nos 577–81 (but without the captive) and nos 582–5 (with the captive).

²⁸ *BMC* 2.307 no. *, 315 no. 81, 316 no. 82, 318 no. 91, 319 no. 94, 321 no. 99, 323 no. 114, 325 no. 125, 329 no. 143, 334 no. 174, 340 no. 211, 343 no. 228.

precious metal coinage of 84 CE and after, the *capta* figure appears alone, enlarged, elaborated and removed from the Vespasianic composition in which she previously appeared (fig. 5). Naked to the waist and wearing breeches, she sits on a shield with other weapons around her. Although earlier Flavian coins are an immediate source of this type,²⁹ its design also owes much to single seated figures of conquered provincials on Augustan and Tiberian monuments such as the Gallia and Hispania on the cuirass of the Augustus of Prima Porta and the figures in Eastern dress in the lower register of the Grand Cameo.³⁰ On coin types, as elsewhere, Domitianic art moves away from the earlier Flavians' adherence to republican and Augustan numismatic models into a more cosmic realm as reflected by its allusion to the combination of the gods and personifications on the Tiberian cameo and Augustan cuirass.

Supplicatio/Adoratio Types

On *capta* types the Roman conqueror is celebrated and elevated through the subjection of his conquered barbarian foe. The captured enemies are prisoners, hands tied or mourning their fate. They do not interact with the power that has subjected them. On *supplicatio* and *adoratio* types the successful Roman plays a different role. The kneeling (or, less often, standing) figures reach out to him: on *supplicatio* types the foreigner offers a gift intended to gain the Roman's favour; on *adoratio* types the figure holds out his hands in a gesture of prayer or pleading. The Roman's power, which lies in his ability to accept or reject the plea or gift of those who sue for his favour, is palpable and his reaction is indicated by his dress, his gestures and/or his size and position in the composition. In some cases, customarily in *supplicatio* scenes, he reacts favourably; in others, more usually in *adoratio* scenes, he does not.

This composition originated in the near eastern ritual of kneeling before the ruler, a ritual that entered the Greek vocabulary of kingship at the time of Alexander's conquests (e.g., Luc. 10.272; Sen. *Suas.* 1.2). Roman republican generals in the East were the recipients

²⁹ See above, n. 15.

³⁰ Andreae (1977) pl. 34 (Augustus of Prima Porta), pl. 57 (Grand Cameo).

of such well-established tokens of respect, and could use them to surround themselves with the aura of great power. The representation of this ritual of kneeling before the ruler had to be used carefully, however. The kneeling posture was redolent of kingship, and the Romans of the republic feared nothing more than that one of these powerful commanders would, in fact, establish himself as king at Rome. On the earlier coins of this period, only easterners, or their Punic descendants in north Africa, appear kneeling before the conqueror. Later republican and Augustan types are minted outside Rome.

The *supplicatio* composition appears three times on republican coins, first in 56 BCE as the reverse type of coins issued by Faustus, the adopted son of the dictator Sulla (*RRC* 426.1). On these coins, the Mauretanian king Bocchus kneels in front of togate Sulla, who is seated to the right and high above him.³¹ The king extends an olive branch, symbol of peace, to Sulla, who extends his right hand to receive it. Below Sulla is Bocchus' son-in-law, the Numidian king Jugurtha, a kneeling captive, hands tied behind his back. This scene commemorates the end of the Jugurthine war, when Bocchus sued for peace with the Romans by handing his father-in-law over to Sulla, thereby obtaining Sulla's favour (indicated by the offer of the latter's right hand) and retaining his own kingdom and extending it into Numidia. On the second republican *supplicatio* type (briefly discussed above), a kneeling figure in a cloak and breeches extends an olive branch to an absent Roman whose reaction can only be imagined (*RRC* 431.1). A camel behind the figure marks the eastern location of the *supplicatio*, as do the characteristically Eastern dress and the inscription IUDAEUS BACCHIUS.³²

The third appearance of the *supplicatio* scene is on coins of Sextus Pompey (*RRC* 469–70). On one coin a personification of Spain kneels before Pompey and offers him a shield (*RRC* 470.1b). The Roman, in military dress, reaches out to accept the gift, undoubtedly symbolic of the military aid offered to Sextus in his campaign against the forces of the second triumvirate. The peaceful relationship is fur-

³¹ The design was also the subject of Sulla's signet ring. In general, see *RRC* 426.1. The surrender was the subject of tablets erected by Bocchus on the Capitol at Rome.

³² Who the type represents (Aristoboulos or Dionysios of Tripoli) is uncertain (*RRC* 431.1). Bacchius is a Roman title of Jehovah.

ther emphasised by the *adventus* scene to the left, where a Spanish city greets the general who looks back at her over his shoulder.

There are two Augustan examples of the *supplex/adorans* theme.³³ One is a *supplicatio* type on the coins of moneyers of 18 BCE (*BMC* 1.3–4 nos 10–17, 8 nos 40–2, 11 nos 56–9). On these coins, a kneeling Parthian, in native dress similar to that of the Jewish figure above, extends the standard of a Roman legion to an unseen Roman recipient (probably Tiberius). The scene represents the return in 20 BCE of the Roman standards taken by the Parthians from Crassus in the defeat at Carrhae in 56 BCE. The missing Roman must be imagined as reacting favourably, as on the similar scene (with a standing Parthian) on the cuirass of the Prima Porta Augustus.

As part of the campaign in the East that accomplished the return of the standards, Tiberius conquered Armenia, a buffer state between Parthia and the Roman province of Asia, and set up a vassal king there. In allusion to this, the other Augustan type has a kneeling Armenian in native dress of tiara and a long robe extending his hands in a gesture of *adoratio* to the imagined Roman before him (*BMC* 1.8 nos 43–4). The inscription ARMENIA CAPTA reinforces the message of obeisance and the figure, like that of the Jew above, is left alone, without a figure to aid in his plight.³⁴

After the types of 18 BCE, *supplicatio* and *adoratio* types are absent from the coins for some eighty-five years. They reappear suddenly

³³ Compare the standing Parthians offering the standards to Augustus on top of a triumphal arch: *BMC* 1.79 nos 416–22.

³⁴ Two other Augustan coin types minted at Lugdunum in Gaul are related to these scenes of *supplicatio* (*BMC* 1.77–8 nos 443–9; Kuttner [1995] fig. 87), though exactly how is poorly understood. On one, Tiberius and Drusus, two young commanders under Augustus, extend olive branches to Augustus, who sits togate on a podium above and to the right and reaches out to accept the offering. Significant problems arise in relating this type to the supplication types discussed in the text not only because the young commanders stand (as do the Parthians on an Augustan coin and the Prima Porta cuirass) but also because they act as surrogates for the conquered people (presumably the Rhaetians) and present symbols of victory (laurels) instead of contributions from the native peoples to the commander above them. On the second type, which appears on the reverse of later issues from the Augustan mint at Lugdunum (8/7 BCE), a standing German or Gaul (the absence of breeches and the mint in Gaul militate against an identification of the figure as a Parthian) extends a baby to a togate Augustus seated above him on a military seat (*sella castrensis*), while Augustus extends his hand to accept the child. The problems that surround the interpretation of this type center on the fact that it appears either to represent a ritual/occasion undocumented elsewhere or to be a mixed type of which the exact implications remain obscure.

when Vespasian comes to the throne. Along with the contemporary *capta* types, they are part of the revival of the ideal of the republican general.³⁵

There are three examples of the *supplicatio/adoratio* theme on Flavian coins. The earliest appears on *sestertii* of Vespasian (72–73 CE). On the left is a palm tree; on the right, the figure of a radiate Roman conqueror in military dress standing with one foot upon a prow. Between them a female Jew approaches, her hands raised in a gesture of *adoratio*, while a male kneels before the Roman, hands also outstretched (*BMC* 2.147 no. 652). The Roman, however, does not respond to their plea. He stands in the pose of a Hellenistic deity, right foot on a ship's prow and a statuette of Victoria in his right hand, clearly above and beyond the reach of the abject Jews.

The second type, issued by Domitian while his father was emperor (77–78 CE: *BMC* 2.42 no. 231–3) is a restoration of the *supplicatio* type issued under Augustus in celebration of the Parthians' return of the Roman standards to Tiberius. Domitian had urged his father to give him a command to aid the Parthian king Vologaesius, who in 75 requested help against the Alani (Suet. *Dom* 2.2; Cass. Dio 65.15.3; cf. Tac. *Hist.* 1.2), probably on the basis of his earlier support for Vespasian in his bid for power at Rome. Through the coin type Domitian apparently pleads that he, like Tiberius, be sent to help bring glory to the emperor (so, *BMC* 2.xli). Vespasian, however, decided not to come to the aid of the Parthians (Cass. Dio 65.15.3). Whatever hopes of glory Domitian had in this arena were dashed.

On bronze *sestertii* issued by Domitian in 85–86 CE (*BMC* 2.363 nos 299–300, 379 no. +), a partially draped German woman kneels before her Roman conqueror, who stands to the right in military dress (fig. 6). The German holds an oblong shield with her left hand; her right hand is extended in the gesture of *adoratio*, pleading for peace and safety. The emperor looming above does not respond; rather, his right hand is held firmly against his chest.

On Domitian's coins, as on Sextus Pompey's before them, the kneeling, obeisant figure is not the representative of a conquered Eastern people. The appropriation of the Eastern ritual for the Ger-

³⁵ The theme does appear, though modified, on the cuirass of the Augustus of Prima Porta (standing Parthian), one of the Boscoreale cups (Andreae [1977] figs 299–301), and in the gesture of a German on a bronze statuette in Paris (Brilliant [1963] fig. 2.62).

man, as well as the huge size of the emperor, illustrate an increased emphasis on the imperial figure and his iconic importance as military commander.³⁶ This trend toward exaggerated glorification of the emperor through a stereotyped scene in which he is the focal point of the action is also apparent in the scenes of Domitian's arrival and departure on the Cancellaria Reliefs³⁷ and seems to herald a stage in the ideology of imperial power of the Roman leader only seen before on the provincial coins of Sextus Pompey.

Restitutio Types

Scenes of restitution depict a Roman leader who takes the hand of a female figure kneeling below him in order to restore her to a standing position.³⁸ On *restitutio* types the Roman leader is celebrated not for subjecting his foe but for the use of his power to restore territory to an earlier, better position. The subordinate figure, although kneeling, is not abject or hopeless, but looks toward the leader who is about to return her to a state of well-being.

On coins, the motif first appears on provincial *denarii* of Staius Murcus, a governor of Syria who commanded the naval forces of Brutus and Cassius in the eastern Mediterranean (*RRC* 510.1).³⁹ Because the coins are issued in Murcus' own name, they appear to have been minted after the defeat of Brutus and Cassius at the battle of Philippi, in the period when Murcus continued the fight in the East against the forces of the second triumvirate.⁴⁰ The *restitutio* takes place against the background of a trophy that may refer to Murcus' own victories, perhaps specifically the victory at Apamea in Syria.⁴¹

Murcus, to the right, wears Roman civilian dress and holds a sword in his left hand. The kneeling female is draped and has the uncoiffed hair of a captive. Although Weinstock identifies her as

³⁶ Gauls appear in this position on the early Tiberian Boscoreale cups: Kuttner (1995) pls 4–5. This is, however, in a more private context.

³⁷ Andrae (1977) pls 389–90.

³⁸ The title of this section comes from the inscription on *BMC* 1.358 nos 258–9.

³⁹ The Via Cassia relief that was formerly thought to be Caesarian (Weinstock [1971] pl. 4) is now generally considered to be of uncertain date.

⁴⁰ Weinstock (1971) 46 dates the types a year or two earlier.

⁴¹ Weinstock (1971) 46.

Oikoumene (a personification of the civilised world),⁴² it is more likely that she is a personification of *libertas* (liberty). This identification is supported by the inscription LIBERTAS RESTITUTA accompanying similar types on coins of Galba (*BMC* 1.358 nos 258–9) and Vespasian (*BMC* 2.118 no. 549, 186 no. 768) and by the fact that the restoration of liberty was the most important rallying cry of Brutus and Cassius, whose naval forces Staius Murcus commanded.

Like the one republican *restitutio* design,⁴³ the single Flavian *restitutio* design was issued in Syria (*BMC* 2.106 no. 504). On this coin Vespasian, naked but for the heroic drapery around his shoulders, stands on the right and holds a long spear in his left hand. The nude heroic figure of the emperor is by this time a well-established conceit whereby the human commander assumes the guise of a Hellenistic king or god. The type may have a specific sculptural model.⁴⁴ With his right hand, the heroic Roman reaches out to lift a kneeling figure who wears Greco-Roman dress and a mural crown. The only distinguishing attribute of the kneeling figure is her mural crown, an attribute that is common to personifications of individual cities, such as Antioch; to personifications of Asia, as rich in cities; and to the *Oikoumene* more generally.⁴⁵ There is no further clue to her identity. The mint and the date (72 CE) of these coins indicates that this *restitutio* type alludes to recent benefits brought by the new ruling family of Rome through their victories and settlements in Judaea, Syria and, perhaps, more broadly throughout the East and elsewhere. The type, however, like Murcus', is deliberately vague.

There is no evidence on coins of the republican and Augustan period or of the Flavian period for the development of the concept of the Roman leader as the restorer of a specific geographical area outside of Rome. Only the concept of the Roman leader as restorer

⁴² Neither the treatment of the hair nor the drapery is consonant with Crawford's identification of the female figure as Roma (*RRC* 2.742).

⁴³ The motif appears again on a rare Augustan *aureus* issued by Cossus Lentulus in 12 BCE where the togate emperor raises the kneeling figure of the *res publica*, Roma in her civic, rather than military dress (*RIC* 1.73.413).

⁴⁴ Andreae (1977) pls 23, 224–30; cf. *BMC* 2.107 nos 510–11, also of Antioch with a naked Roman.

⁴⁵ Oikoumene with the mural crown appears on the Gemma Augustea crowning the emperor: Andreae (1977) pl. 317. I find the newly acquired 'Augustan' *aureus* in the British Museum suspect. The legend reads: *leges et iura P. R. restituit* ('he restored the laws and rights of the Roman people'): Rich and Williams (1999) 169–213.

of the Roman state, of the *libertas* of Rome's citizens and, possibly of a broader but vague geographical area, is a significant part of the numismatic ideology. In the Hadrianic period the emperor will appear as the restorer of individual provinces. On coins of the Flavian period there is no hint of this future development.

Fides Types

The last group of coin types are those that portray the conquered land as a faithful partner of Rome.⁴⁶ On these types a figure that personifies the province stands erect, either alone or with a personification of Roman power. When both figures are present, the inferiority of the province is indicated by the province's position to the left and, less often, by her smaller size. The provincial representation may wear Greco-Roman civic dress, Amazon dress or native civic or military attire. The type is elaborated with adjuncts such as wheat ears, *cornucopiae* and native weapons that indicate the unique contributions of the province to the prosperity and peace or the military power of the empire, contributions that are made possible by the partnership illustrated by the coin type.

The earlier of two republican/Augustan *fides* types appears on *denarii* of Fufius and Calenus issued *circa* 70–68 BCE (*RRC* 403.1). On these coins Italia appears along with Roma. Both figures are standing and shaking hands in the standard Roman gesture of *fides*. The figures are identified as personifications by the inscriptions ITA(LIA) AND RO(MA). Roma wears military dress; Italia, standard Greco-Roman civilian dress. The two personifications are of equal size, but the lesser status of Italia is indicated by her position to the left.

The type illustrates the partnership that resulted from the grant of Roman citizenship to all Italians south of the Po at the conclusion of the Social war of 91–87 BCE. This grant, and its enactment through the census of 70 BCE in which the Italians first were enrolled as citizens, concluded hundreds of years of strife between Rome and the peoples of Italy.

The dress and attributes of each personification indicate her contribution to the partnership. Italia is a source of agricultural bounty,

⁴⁶ The title of this section comes from the handshake, symbol of *fides*, that is, the focal point of the first type.

as indicated by the caduceus, symbol of *felicitas* (felicity) behind her, her civilian dress and the *cornucopiae* she holds. Roma's military/political dominance is shown by the *fascēs* behind her, her Hellenistic diadem, warrior's garb and her stance resting her foot on the globe.

The personification of a Spanish city on coins issued for Sextus Pompey (*RRC* 470.1b, discussed above) is part of a larger scene that includes the victorious Roman general and a *supplicatio* scene in which a female personification kneels and offers a shield to the general above her. The figure of the faithful province, in civic dress like the kneeling figure, occupies the prominent position on the left of the type and is equal in size to the Roman whom she greets with her raised right hand.

On another type of this same moneyer (*RRC* 470.1a), the personification of a Spanish city in civic dress shakes hands with the arriving general. Once again, her equal, or near equal, size, and her position on the type, as well as her dress and the handshake of *fides* indicate an equality that is far from the earlier republican numismatic representations of this area.

The next *fides* types centre on the figures of Hispania and Gallia, and celebrate the support of these two provinces in Galba's bid to become emperor. In 68 CE Galba was proclaimed emperor while governor in Spain. Before this, he had joined with Vindex, who led a revolt against Nero in Gallia Lugdunensis. On his way to Rome, Galba found support for his accession in Southern Gaul.

On one of these *fides* types, issued both in Spain and at Rome (*BMC* 1.311 no. 14, 339 nos 174–5), Hispania dressed in Greco-Roman fashion stands alone. She holds wheat ears and a poppy⁴⁷ in her left hand and her characteristic round shield and double javelins in her right. An inscription identifies the figure as a personification of the province. On a second type, Hispania, or the personification of the Spanish city of Clunia, stands in Greco-Roman civil attire holding *cornucopiae* and offering the *palladium*, symbol of the power and safety of Rome, to Galba who is seated to her left (*BMC* 1.356–7 no. 252*).

Hispania also appears standing and, in the gesture of *fides*, shaking hands with Gallia (*BMC* 1.338–9 nos 170–1). Both wear military dress. Hispania's attributes are a round shield, sword and long

⁴⁷ The same attributes appear with the *concordia prouincarum* type: *BMC* 1.309 nos 1–2.

spear; Gallia's, a boar-headed sceptre. Busts of both Gallia and Hispania also appear with a Greco-Roman hairstyle on several Galban types, at times together.⁴⁸

On Pompey's coins the barbarian attributes attached to Spaniards and Gauls in the earlier period have vanished. The transition in the Roman idea of these peoples from barbarian to civilised took place for at least some of the Spaniards by the end of the republic, when types celebrating the arrival of Sextus Pompey in Spain show personifications of the province's cities in fully Greco-Roman attire (*RRC* 469.1, 470.1a–b). Gallia, more recently acquired and not fully pacified, first appears as Romanised on the Galban series. On these coins both provinces appear as allies and partners in power, offering their bounty and their arms to the service of the emperor.

Vespasian's power and claim to the throne, like that of Galba whose bid for the throne he supported, originated in the provinces. He continued to favour the provinces, granting Latin rights to many cities in the East and to nearly all of Spain. One of Vespasian's two *fides* types celebrates the long established partnership between Rome and Italy; the other, the newly established status of Spain as a full partner in empire. Adumbrated on the coins of Pompey the Younger (*RRC* 470.1–3) and announced on the coins of Galba and Vespasian, this partnership would soon result in the ascension of a native of Spain to the imperial throne.

Vespasian's Hispania type appears on rare *aurei* assigned to the mint at Tarraco and dated to very early in his reign (*BMC* 2.68 no. *). The personification of Spain stands alone and holds wheat ears in her outstretched left hand and a round shield and double javelins on her left shoulder. She wears military dress, including cuirass and high boots.

Methy argues that Vespasian's Hispania type is the earliest evidence for an important ideological shift from the representation of provinces as conquered enemies connected to specific military campaigns to the more general idea of a province as a confident contributor to the ongoing peace and abundance of the empire.⁴⁹ She bases her argument for the existence of this new ideology on what she believes to be novel characteristics of Vespasian's Hispania type:

⁴⁸ Gallia: *BMC* 1.345 no. 206; 346–7 nos 211–14 (three Gauls); Hispania: *BMC* 336 nos 161–2, 346 no. 207; Gallia and Hispania together: *BMC* 1.293 no. +.

⁴⁹ Methy (1992) 277.

(1) a new confident stance; (2) a highly realistic native costume; (3) a new meaning of the attributes of abundance and military power as contributions to the empire, rather than as symbols of the province's subjection; and (4) the lack of any reference on the types to a specific historical event.

The first three of these characteristics are certainly present but, as we have seen above, they are not new: (1) The confident stance is shared by all of the *fides* types, from the republican Italia type onward. (2) Hispania's dress is not new, but remarkably similar to the short tunic with cuirass, high boots and weapons on some of the Galban Hispania types.⁵⁰ (3) The attributes of *cornucopiae* on the republican Italia type and the wheat ears and weapons of Galba's Hispania do not refer to defeat but to the positive contributions of those areas to the welfare of Rome or the emperor.

There is also no evidence for the existence of Methy's fourth characteristic. Vespasian's Hispania type is not a generalised reference to the contributions of Spain to the empire, but specifically is connected by its early date and Spanish mint to the support of this province in Vespasian's bid for power. Vespasian's Hispania is in no way novel, and does not reflect a shift in ideology.

Vespasian's other *fides* type is a personification of Italia on gold coins issued close to the end of his reign (*BMC* 44 nos 249–50 of 78–79 BCE). Like the republican Italia type, Vespasian's personification of Italy wears Greco-Roman civic dress and carries a symbol of her agricultural bounty (the corn ears held in her left hand). She also holds a long sceptre and wears a mural crown, symbols of civic power. Although we do not know the precise reason for this type, it does represent the partnership between Rome and Italy already expressed on coins of the republican period.

As far as we can tell, with the possible exception of Italia, each of the Augustan and Flavian coin types that represent the relationship of *fides* with the Romans is set firmly in its own historical context. On coins, it is not until Hadrian's great provincial series that the coin types exhibit a more comprehensive idea of an empire in large part divorced from the context of contemporary events and representational of a union based on a relationship of *fides* with a

⁵⁰ *BMC* 1.304 n. + (Paris) attributed to this period; 1.338 nos 170–1 with allowances for the position of the figure.

number of provinces contributing to the central power and communal prosperity.

Conclusion

A review of four groups of coin types that present the Flavian emperors as conquerors shows that there is remarkably little difference between these types and types on the coins of republican conquerors and Augustus. The most prominent motif in both periods is the *capta* type, which represents the Roman as absolute victor over a fallen barbarian foe. All of the republican variations of this motif recur in the Flavian period. Only the identity of the foe changes, a change made in response to the shifting frontiers and problem points of the empire: the Spaniards and Gauls of the republican and Augustan types are replaced on Flavian coins by Britons, Jews and Germans; but the ideal of the Roman leader as a conqueror, ennobled by his victory over the barbarian foe, remains remarkably constant.

Supplicatio and *adoratio* coin types, which are also prominent in both the republican, Augustan and Flavian periods, serve to reinforce the ideology of the Roman commander as all powerful conqueror. This reinforcement occurs through rituals of obeisance adopted by Hellenistic Greeks and republican generals from Eastern kings, who were perceived as demanding absolute fealty from their subjects. When adopted by the Romans, these rituals raised the perception of the victorious magistrate to levels of power unthinkable to previous generations of the republic.

The two other groups of coin types, the *restitutio* types and the *fidelis* types, appear far less frequently in both periods. These compositions express an ideology of Roman civic and military power reaching out to, restoring or co-operating with territories under Rome's sway, an ideology still in its infancy. Although the artistic language in which to express these concepts clearly existed, coin designers of the republican, Augustan and Flavian periods did not develop its possibilities. They were not overlooked, however, on coins of Hadrian and his successors in the next century.⁵¹

⁵¹ See Kuttner (1995) *passim* for some possible Augustan non-numismatic examples.

4. POETRY AND POLITICS AT THE GAMES OF DOMITIAN

Alex Hardie

1. *Introduction*

Domitian founded two festivals, the quinquennial *Capitolia* at Rome and an annual event in honour of Minerva on his Alban estate. The latter lapsed after his death, but the *Capitolia* retained their place among the sacred festivals of the Greco-Roman world and were celebrated until late antiquity. By any standards the Capitoline festival was a major politico-cultural innovation at Rome, yet until the appearance of Maria Letizia Caldelli's admirable *L'Agon Capitolinus* in 1994 it attracted little sustained scholarly interest.¹ One reason for this analytical neglect may lie in the paucity of archeological remains associated with the *Capitolia*. Domitian certainly gave his new foundation a well-defined monumental context, in the form of a Stadium and Odeum in the Campus Martius, but the visible remains are modest (Suet. *Dom.* 5).² By contrast, the Alban site of the Minerva festival, including the theatre where the literary events took place, is well preserved at the modern Castel Gandolfo. One aim of this chapter will accordingly be to relate the games to their respective settings in Rome and the Alban hills. I shall also offer an account of the place of both festivals within the cultural politics of the later Flavian era and a re-assessment of what Statius has to say about his own participation as a competitor in the Latin poetry events.

¹ Caldelli (1994). Summary treatments in Friedländer (1968b) 264–8; Lana (1951) 145–60; Robert (1970) 6–27; Hardie (1983) 46–7; Coleman (1986) 3097–100; Jones (1992) 103–5.

² Colini (1938) 264–6; Colini (1943). In referring to Domitian's Stadium and Odeum, I use the Latinised spellings; otherwise, *stadion* and *odeion*. For the terminology, see Meinel (1979) 25–9.

2. *The Capitolia*

A generation earlier, Nero too had founded two new festivals, the *Iuuenalia* (in 59 CE) and the *Neronia* (60 CE). The former were staged at a private theatre built next to his new (also private) Circus Gai et Neronis on the Vatican (Plin. *HN* 37.19); for the latter, a quinquennial event on the Greek model, Nero built a gymnasium and baths in the Campus Martius immediately west of the area where the Stadium and Odeum were later to be placed (Suet. *Nero* 12.3; Cass. Dio 62.21; Tac. *Ann.* 14.17.3; Philostr. *VA* 4.42). Nero's legacy impinged directly on the Flavians. Vespasian's sons shared the contemporary enthusiasm for musical and rhetorical performance that the emperor and his festivals encouraged among the Roman upper classes.³ Domitian was tutored by a distinguished performer on the Greek festival circuit, the father of P. Papinius Statius.⁴ Born in 51 CE, he would have been too young to witness the first *Neronia* and to hear the *Laudes Neronis* with which Lucan, aged 20, won the Latin poetry crown on that occasion.⁵ But he might well have witnessed the second *Neronia* in 64/65 CE and he will certainly have been aware of Nero's performances as *citharoedus* ('a cithara player'), his competitive 'victories', and his triumphal return from Greece as *Periodonikes*.⁶

If Nero was a 'premature philhellene', Domitian at least had the benefit of his unsuccessful example, as also of reactions to his efforts to set up a Greek festival at Rome (Tac. *Ann.* 14.20.1).⁷ Within Nero's complex motivation, the need to appeal to the cultural identity of the Greek east must have played a part, but he was also driven by a strong desire to prove his personal ability in competition.⁸ Domitian, himself a poet who had recited in public, gave up the latter practice after his accession and allowed it to be understood that he had done so in order to devote himself to the burdens of office (Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.91; Suet. *Dom.* 2.2; Tac. *Hist.* 4.86; cf. Mart. *Epigr.* 5.5.7; Val. Flacc. 1.12–14; Sil. *Pun.* 3.619–21; Stat. *Achill.* 1.16–17).⁹

³ Sullivan (1985) 33. For Nero's literary circle, see Sullivan (1985) 31–9.

⁴ Hardie (1983) 6–8, 11; Coleman (1988) xv; Jones (1992) 12–13.

⁵ Griffin (1984) 157–8.

⁶ Griffin (1984) 160–3; Kennell (1988) 239–51. For the second *Neronia*, see Bolton (1948) 82–90; Malavolta (1978) 395–415.

⁷ 'Premature': Syme (1982) 20 (= Syme [1988] 11).

⁸ Griffin (1984) 208–20.

⁹ Bardon (1968) 280–4.

As emperor, he did not make Nero's mistake of competing in his own festivals and he did not confuse his personal literary enthusiasms with issues of public policy.

In the long historical process of eastern penetration of governing circles at Rome, the guiding influence of imperial policy on the politico-cultural environment can be identified at a few points along the way, and Domitian's *Capitolia* festival seems to represent one such juncture.¹⁰ Alert to eastern regard for Nero and to the frustrated expectations which in 69, 80 and again in 89 CE found expression in the appearance of pretenders to his name (at least one of them equipped with a lyre), Domitian was conscious of a requirement 'to overcome [his] memory . . . and conciliate opinion in the eastern lands'.¹¹ The *Capitolia* played their part in this agenda by placing the capital permanently within the festival circuit, which had by this time saturated civic, cultural and religious life in the eastern provinces. The new festival advertised imperial favour for competitive musical and gymnastic activity, integral to an educational system which had traditionally been disdained at Rome; it acknowledged the orators and poets who were the products of Greek education and their growing influence at Rome and in the western provinces; and it brought contemporary Greek talent to Rome for the festival and the pre-festival sojourn there to mix with western counterparts.¹²

The *Capitolia* were thus to provide a showcase for exponents of contemporary *epideixis* in prose and verse. An outstanding example is a late second century victor, the Argive poet M. Aurelios Ptolemaios, whose career included three victories at the *Pythia*, five at the *Nemeia*, four at the *Isthmia*, as well as single victories at the *Eusebeia* at Puteoli, the *Sebasta* at Naples and the *Actia*.¹³ This man was clearly exceptional, but the *Capitolia* will certainly have been a major new feature on the circuit of events at which professional poets might compete in the first and second centuries CE. Yet significant though this epideictic interface between east and west undoubtedly was, there may be some risk of overestimating the professional stature of Greek participants in the prose and poetry competitions at the *Capitolia*. Analysis

¹⁰ On this process, see Syme (1982).

¹¹ Syme (1958) 518; cf. Syme (1982) 21 (= Syme [1988] 12-13).

¹² For thirty day pre-festival sojourns, cf. *Inscr. Olymp.* 56.18-26 (Dittenberger and Purgold [1896]).

¹³ *FD* 89; Caldelli (1994) 143 no. 41.

of the hierarchy of events in Greek festivals of around the same period, as measured by prize money and by relative placings in the programme order, reveals that the culminating, blue riband event was *citharoedia*.¹⁴ By contrast, prose encomiographers and the poets attract much lower prizes and their events are placed near the start of festivals. This reflects the level of professional skill required by the virtuoso *citharoedi* ('cithara players') and it suggests that proficient poets and orators were easier to attract to festival competition and could compete creditably at a younger age (cf. Mart. *Epigr.* 3.7–8: *poeta/exierat: ueniet, cum citharoedus erit*, 'he left as a poet; he'll return when he's a *citharoedus*'). The relatively high rewards (HS 200,000) given to *citharoedi* by Vespasian at the *ludi* that marked the re-dedication of the Theatre of Marcellus help confirm the pattern (Suet. *Vesp.* 19.1).¹⁵

Of course, not all Greek competitors came from the east. A young participant in the Greek poetry event in 94 CE, Q. Sulpicius Maximus, lived at Rome with his parents as a Roman citizen.¹⁶ The bilingual inscription which records his precocious appearance is a useful reminder of the degree to which the virtuoso skills of the epideictic performer had already penetrated cultural life at the capital. Statius, the son of a Neapolitan professional poet who had won competitive eminence and civic honours in Greece, and himself a successful competitor at the Neapolitan *Sebasta*, well exemplifies this unfolding process.¹⁷ Again, there was nothing in the instrumental and singing events that was unknown at Rome, with the possible exception of cithara accompanied by chorus (*chorocitharistae*);¹⁸ a large body of evidence shows that private and public performances by solo and accompanied lyre and *aulos* ('pipe') players were integral to musical life at Rome, and also that the maintenance of singing choirs was by no means a rarity.¹⁹ In the Flavian era, a Roman *citharoedus*, Pollio, could even aspire to the crown at the *Capitolia*.²⁰

Domitian presided at the *Capitolia*, on display not simply to a civic assembly, but also to the provincials who travelled to Rome and

¹⁴ Wörle (1988) 229–36.

¹⁵ Unusually, a tragic actor received most (HS 400,000). In general, Friedländer (1968a) 341–2, 353–5.

¹⁶ *IGUR* 1336 B 2–3.

¹⁷ Clinton (1972); Hardie (1983) 6–14, 58–9.

¹⁸ Caldelli (1994) 69; Bélis (1988) 243–4.

¹⁹ Wille (1967) 306–66; Friedländer (1968a) 337–65.

²⁰ *Juv. Sat.* 6.387–8; *RE s.v. Pollio* (5).

who might then go on to the *Sebasta* at Naples and thence to the *Actia* in Asia Minor.²¹ For this truly empire-wide occasion, perhaps the only one of its kind at the capital, he was attired in the purple Greek mantle which seems to have been the prescribed dress for the *agonothetes* ('the exhibitor of games') in Greek festival decrees (Suet. *Dom.* 4.4).²² We can only guess at the benefits that accrued, in terms of the impression made on easterners by a prince who, in his own city, so manifestly identified with their cultural traditions and aspirations. Given the Neronian antecedents, it was a sensible policy which cohered well with other symbolic gestures towards the Greek world.²³ But the *Capitolia* were designed to attract participants from the western provinces as well. They registered imperial acknowledgement that Latin letters could benefit from the social and political example of the Greek *epideixis* and that (in Tacitus' summary of the arguments in favour of the *Neronia*) 'victories of orators and bards would provide an incentive to talent' (*oratorum ac uatum uictorias incitamentum ingenii adlaturas*, *Ann.* 14.21.5). And so it may have proved, for some younger entrants to the *Capitolia* Latin poetry evidently competed to establish a name and a career. P. Annius Florus, the poet and historian from North Africa, is a Flavian example,²⁴ and as late as the fourth century, Ausonius could trace the origins of the career of a distinguished Gallic *rhetor* to his victory in the Latin poetry competition at the *Capitolia* (*Aus.* 11.5.5–8). Domitian will have wanted to see men such as these as competitors and winners, as well as spectators, at his new festival. Florus himself, though a disappointed loser, may reflect an official line when he describes himself competing 'in that assembly place of all the world' (*in illo orbis terrarum conciliabulo*, *Vergilius Orator an Poeta* 1.4).

The *Neronia* were patently modelled on eastern festivals in honour of kings and Roman generals where the dedicatee was the focal point of the poetry and oratory events. Domitian's dedication to Jupiter Capitolinus will have suggested a parallel with the Olympic Games,

²¹ Millar (1977) 365. For this order of events, cf. *Stat. Silv.* 2.2.6–8 (*Sebasta* followed by *Actia*); Domitian's *Capitolia* probably took place in May/June, as in 146 CE: Caldelli (1994) 56–8; the *Sebasta* and *Actia* followed (Hardie [1983] 62).

²² For the Greek precedent, compare lines 56–7 of the inscription recording the foundation of a festival by G. Iulius Demosthenes at Oenoanda, cited from Wörle (1988) 4–17 (hereafter, 'Oenoanda').

²³ Cf. *IG* 2.1996.1–3 (Archon at Athens).

²⁴ Caldelli (1994) 125 no. 5.

but will also have recalled the significance of the Capitoline citadel (*arx*) both for the preservation of imperial Rome and for the foundation of the Flavian dynasty itself.²⁵ The Capitoline/Flavian connection was accentuated by deft sacral stage-management. Domitian was flanked by the priest of Jupiter, the *Flamen Dialis*, and by the *collegium* of the *Sodales Flauiales Titiales*, the latter bearing Domitian's image in their crowns in addition to those of the Capitoline triad. This detail is paralleled in a near-contemporary festival decree from Asia Minor and here, as in other respects, Domitian's sacral arrangements will have been adapted from Greek precedents.²⁶ The *Sodales Flauiales* themselves had some association with the cult of Jupiter and this may have helped shape their role at the *Capitolia*.²⁷ The juxtaposition of the ancient *Flamen Dialis* with the priests of the Flavian dynasty as presiding luminaries at a Greco-Roman agonistic festival must have struck traditionalists as odd indeed, but Domitian avoided Nero's experimentation with a festival dedicated to his own person, while retaining an indirect focus on his family and himself through sacral associations with the cult of Jupiter at Rome. As a further manifestation of this association, it can be assumed that the *Capitolia* programme included a procession, led by Domitian, from the competition site to the restored Temple of Jupiter O.M. on the Capitol, and sacrifices there to the Capitoline triad (cf. *Inscr. Olymp.* 56.48–52, esp. 49 on the Neapolitan *Sebasta*: πο[μπ]ήν . . . εἰς τὸ Καίσαρ[εῖον], 'procession to the Caesareum').²⁸ The gymnastic, equestrian and musical participants will have processed, perhaps with their city origins on display, in a unique sacral-civic ceremony on the Roman citadel, and in something akin to the opening assembly of competitors at the modern Olympics, the provinces, and the cream of their intellectual and athletic talent, will have been on display every four years at the capital.

Domitian constructed spectacular new settings for his *Capitolia*. For the musical, poetry and rhetoric events, he built the Odeum (roofed theatre) in the Campus Martius. This is recorded in the later Regionary Catalogues of Rome as containing 10,600 *loca*.²⁹ The precise significance

²⁵ Caldelli (1994) 62–3; cf. Barzano (1982) 11–20.

²⁶ At the early second century CE Demostheneia festival in Oenoanda, the agonothete wore a gold crown bearing the images of Hadrian and Apollo (Oenoanda, 52–3).

²⁷ Momigliano (1935) 165–71 (= Momigliano [1975] 657–66).

²⁸ Geer (1935) 212. Cf. Oenoanda 68–70; Wörle (1988) 253–6.

²⁹ *Curiosum Urbis Romae Regionum XIII* and *Notitia Urbis Romae Regionum XIII*, in Valentini and Zucchetti (1940) 310; Suet. *Dom.* 5.

of such *loca* figures for actual seating capacity remains debateable and modern estimates of the capacity of the Odeum range from 5,000 to over 10,000.³⁰ The true capacity will lie towards the lower end of this range.³¹ There is, however, some uncertainty as to the date at which this recorded capacity was actually achieved. Cassius Dio (69.4.1) names the architect as Apollodorus of Damascus and ascribes the construction to the reign of Trajan, and it seems possible that Domitian's Odeum was rebuilt and enlarged.³²

This was not the first Flavian *odeion*, for Vespasian himself had built one, also on the grand scale, from the booty from the Jewish war on the site of a synagogue in Caesarea.³³ In the Greek world, *odeia* were traditional locations for literary competitions,³⁴ and a direct Greek influence on Domitian might have been the Neapolitan *Odeion*, for when Statius commends his native city to his wife, the only building complex that he specifies is the 'twin mass of the open and covered theatre', which he juxtaposes with praise of the *Sebasta* as 'next in importance to the Capitoline festival' (*Silv.* 3.5.91–2). He may be recalling his competitive success there, in contrast with his later failure at the *Capitolia*, recorded in the same poem (31–3).

The skill of the *odeion*-architect lay in the design of the roof (which had to span the large space between the walls, generally without interior supports) and of the walls, which had to support the roof while admitting light and air.³⁵ Most known *odeia* had an audience capacity of between 750 and 1,800. A few, for example those at Corinth (3,000), Lyons (3,500) and Augusta Praetorea (3,000) were

³⁰ Platner and Ashby (1929) *s.v.* Odeum Domitiani, give 5,000, citing Huelsen (1894) 312–24; Richardson (1992) *s.v.* Odeum suggests 7,000. Lugli (1970) 460–1 suggests 8,000 (but gives the *loca* figure as 11,600). Friedländer (1968a) 352 assumes that the *loca* figure equals the number of spectators.

³¹ Thus, the capacity formula of Bomgardner (2000) 20 n. 40 gives a Colosseum crowd of 54,760, against 87,000 recorded *loca*; this would yield an Odeum capacity of around 6,500. The lower Colosseum estimate of 45,000 given by Lugli (1970) 388 would yield an Odeum figure of around 5,500. Philostratus (*V S* 2.1.8) claims that Herodes Atticus' *Stadion* and *Odeion* at Athens (the latter holding around 5,000 [see below]), was unsurpassed in the Roman world.

³² So Meinel (1979) 298–9; for a defence of Domitianic dating, see Richardson (1992) 276. Modona (1961) 211 suggests that the Odeum was inaugurated by Trajan on 30 January 112 CE; this is not supported by his reference to the *Fasti Ostienses*.

³³ John Malalas, *Chronographia* 261: ὁδεῖον μέγα πάνυ ('a very big *odeion*').

³⁴ Meinel (1979) 29–30, 138–9. For a historical overview of the Roman *odeion*, see Meinel (1979) 191–9.

³⁵ Meinel (1979); Izenour (1992); also Bieber (1958) 220–2; Modona (1961) 205–14; Segal (1995) 85 n. 187; Chlepa (1999) 415–35.

larger, and the largest known *odeion*, other than Domitian's, was that of Herodes Atticus at Athens, which had a capacity of around 5,000. Were it not for Philostratus' testimony, it might reasonably have been questioned whether ancient technology would have been capable of roofing such a space (Philostr. *V S* 2.1.8).³⁶

That the Roman Odeum really was roofed seems to be confirmed by its status in late antiquity as one of the most spectacular constructions in Rome, for an open theatre which seated between 5,000 and 7,000 spectators cannot have attracted such admiration (Amm. Marc. 16.10.14; Polem. *Silv.* 545). Domitian's Odeum may or may not have been on this scale (see above); nonetheless, if the Flavian Amphitheatre was the most prominent new construction of the reigns of the first two Flavian emperors, the complex that embraced the Odeum and its companion building, the Greek Stadium, has a good claim to stand as its equivalent for Domitian.³⁷

When Statius imagines a future performance of the *Achilleid* in a theatrical setting (*Silv.* 5.2.162–3), he may refer to a performance in the new Odeum. This was poetry on the grand scale, epic declamation as public spectacle witnessed by a great civic audience (cf. *Juv. Sat.* 7.82–4). For this, there were Neronian precedents, in that the poetry events of the *Neronia* were staged in the Theatre of Pompey, which held an audience of over 10,000.³⁸ But Domitian's Odeum will have represented rather more than just a spectacular setting for recitation and competition, for the development of the Greco-Roman *odeion* seems to have marked a move away from the mass, populist audiences associated with open theatre towards more elite gatherings and more intimate performance settings.³⁹ The roofed *odeion* also brought with it acoustic changes. There will have been benefits for musicians, especially singers and instrumentalists playing to choric accompaniment. Audience appreciation of a wider range of voice register will also have encouraged more subtle nuances of poetic intonation.⁴⁰ Greek orators and poets will have rapidly exploited the pos-

³⁶ Cf. Izenour (1992) 134–9, who suggests that the auditorium was partially roofed.

³⁷ Herodes Atticus constructed a *stadium* and *odeion* for his *Panathenaea* (see Philostr. *V S* 2.1 for their spectacular impact); cf. Paus. 7.20.6.

³⁸ Vacca gives this as the location of Lucan's *Laudes Neronis*.

³⁹ Izenour (1992) 63.

⁴⁰ Well brought out in the important technical comments of Izenour (1992) 167–76. The original function of the *odeion* was as a place to sing ᾠδαί ('songs'): see Meinel (1979) 27–9.

sibilities opened up by these new performance-settings. The villa-recitations satirised by Juvenal (*Sat.* 1.12–13) for the acoustic effects of a shouted, declamatory style of epic poetry rendition, seem to be open air affairs, but so far as concerns the true history of the Flavian literary scene, it would be interesting to know how Domitian's Odeum influenced contemporary epic. It will certainly have encouraged the poet to make the most of the dramatic content of his work. In size, however, the Roman Odeum marked a decisive departure from earlier exemplars and suggests a compromise between the mass audience of the theatre and the more elite gathering of the Greco-Roman *odeion*. If this really was Domitian's work and not Trajan's reconstruction, it will have simply astonished the first audiences at the Roman *Capitolia*.

We are reasonably well informed about the epideictic events at the *Capitolia*. Like their counterparts in Greek festivals, participants in the Latin oratory event declaimed prose hymns (Quint. *Inst.* 3.7.4).⁴¹ Sadly, we know the name of only one competitor, M. Palfurius Sura, son of a Neronian consul, who was expelled from the senate by Vespasian but became an intimate of Domitian, a *delator* ('informer'), and won the oratory event in 86, 90 or 94 CE.⁴² Palfurius does not appear in Martial. But another competitor, real or imaginary, may be discerned in the orator 'Ponticus' whom Martial teases with insincere praise in 5.63 (probably published in late 90 CE, but circulated earlier that year, before the *Capitolia*).⁴³ when the orator gratefully responds with the wish that 'Caesar and Capitoline Jupiter be good to you' (*faciat tibi sic bene Caesar, / sic Capitolinus*), 5.63.5–6), Martial replies 'no, to you' (*immo tibi*, 6), implying perhaps that 'Ponticus' aspires to compete in the next *Capitolia* and needs all the luck he can get. The poem seems to reflect the lively anticipation of the festival and accompanying speculation as to likely victors, later satirised by Juvenal (*Sat.* 6.385–8, of the *citharoedus* Pollio).⁴⁴

The poetry events too brought contemporary Greek *epideixis* to the Roman stage. We know from the Q. Sulpicius Maximus inscription that the Greek poetry event called for extempore composition,

⁴¹ Hardie (1983) 98–9.

⁴² *PIR*¹ P 46; Suet. *Dom.* 13.1; *Scholia ad Juv. Sat.* 4.53; Caldelli (1994) 128 no. 11.

⁴³ Contrast Citroni (1989) 220–2, placing book 4 in 88 CE and 5 in 89 CE; see below, n. 59.

⁴⁴ For Martial's circulation of topical epigrams, cf. Coleman (1998) 340–1.

a virtuoso skill widely practised by the epideictic poets of the Greek world, but thus far attested only here for a competitive festival.⁴⁵ Sulpicius competed at the third *Capitolia* in 94 CE with fifty-two other Greek poets and his competition piece, a rhetorical *prosopopoeia* entitled Τίσις ἂν λόγοις χρήσαιτο Ζεὺς ἐπιτιμῶν Ἡλίῳ, ὅτι τὸ ἄρμα ἔδωκε Φαέθοντι ('The Words that Zeus Would Have Used to Censure the Sun for Giving his Chariot to Phaethon'), is preserved in the inscription.⁴⁶ The subject matter is wholly apolitical. It can be assumed that it was given to the competitors before the event, so that the poet's skill will have lain in his handling of the theme and in the length of the poem he could produce in the time available (Sulpicius' effort contains forty three lines). There is no indication as to whether the same subject was given to all competitors so as to enable direct comparisons to be made of the different approaches to the subject or whether different subjects were allocated. Competitors will have drawn lots for their place in the order of performance the day before their events and it may be that allocation of the prescribed subject(s) took place then (*Inscr. Olymp.* 56.56–7; cf. *Anth. Pal.* 11.128.3). It can be assumed that the Latin poetry event also embraced the subject of Jupiter.⁴⁷ It too may have involved extemporisation. There is no direct evidence on the point, but Statius' claims to have extemporised the *Silvae*, evidently part of a wider pattern of Greco-Roman epideictic display, would be consistent with the introduction of a high profile event at Domitian's festival. If so, the subject will have been allocated to the contestants as an unpredictable challenge to their powers of rapid reaction, and this would entail something more than customary free-composition *laudes* ('praise') of the god. If we may extrapolate from the evidence of Q. Sulpicius Maximus, the emphasis will have been on a genuine test of epideictic skills, not on politics as such, or on praise of the emperor through *laudes Iouis* ('praise of Jupiter').

⁴⁵ Hardie (1983) 76–85.

⁴⁶ Caldelli (1994) 126 no. 7.

⁴⁷ Lana (1951) 150 n. 6 goes beyond the evidence in assuming praise of Domitian.

3. *The Alban Festival*

Domitian's festival in honour of Minerva, held on his Alban estate, is familiar to us from *testimonia* in Suetonius and Cassius Dio. The former reads as follows:

celebrabat et in Albano quotannis Quinquatria Mineruae, cui collegium instituerat, ex quo sorte ducti magisterio fungerentur ederentque eximias uenationes et scaenicos ludos superque oratorum ac poetarum certamina.
(Suetonius, *Domitianus* 4.4)

Domitian also celebrated the Quinquatria of Minerva each year on his Alban estate. He founded a priestly college for the goddess, from which were chosen by lot office holders to stage splendid hunts and dramatic games and in addition competitions of orators and poets.

Similarly, Cassius Dio says that Domitian 'celebrated the *Panathenaea* [i.e., *Quinquatria*] in grand style; in them he staged competitions of poets, orators and gladiators just about annually on his Alban estate' (τὰ Παναθήναια μεγάλως ἐώρταζε, καὶ ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀγῶνας καὶ ποιητῶν καὶ λογογράφων μονομάχων τε κατ' ἔτος ὡς εἰπεῖν ἐν τῷ Ἀλβανῷ ἐποίει, 67.1.2). Dio thus omits the *uenationes* ('hunts') and the *ludi scaenici* ('dramatic games') and adds the reference to gladiators. Later, however, he refers to a celebration of a festival called τὰ Νεανισκεύματα ('the youth games', that is, the *Iuuenalia*) on Domitian's Alban estate in which Acilius Glabrio was pitted against a lion while holding the consulship, that is, at some point in first four months of 91 (Cass. Dio 67.14.3; cf. Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 37; Juv. *Sat.* 4.94–101: *iuuene*, 'youth' of the younger Glabrio, at 95).⁴⁸ It seems unlikely that Domitian should stage two different festivals, both involving *uenationes* ('hunts'), on the Alban estate in the first quarter of the same year, and that the two festivals are in fact identical seems to have been put beyond reasonable doubt by M. Rostovzeff's publication in 1898 of a lead tessera carrying the legends IUVEN(es) AUG(ustales) ('Augustan youths') and, on the reverse, ALBAN(i) ('Albans') with a bust of Minerva.⁴⁹ What we seem to have, then, are 'youth games' (*Iuuenalia*) dedicated to Minerva and held, like the *Iuuenalia* of Nero, on private

⁴⁸ The *Acta Fratrum Arualium* show Glabrio and Trajan to be still in consular office on 29 April. For Νεανισκεύματα ('youth games') as *Iuuenalia*, cf. Cass. Dio 61.19.4 (Nero).

⁴⁹ Rostovtseff (1898) 276 no. 19.

ground. The fact that the *aedicula* ('shrine') of Iuventas stood in the *cella* ('chamber') of Minerva in the Capitoline Temple of Jupiter could have been relevant to Domitian's calculations in associating his *Iuuenalia* with Minerva.⁵⁰ Moreover, in the Greek background to the deified personification of Iuventas ('Youth') stood the cult of Hebe, the goddess of youth, a connection highlighted at Rome by the earlier juxtaposition of Iuventas and Hercules (the ever-youthful Olympian partner of Hebe).⁵¹ As it happens, one of the panels of stucco relief work that decorated Domitian's new theatre at the Alban villa seems to have depicted Hercules and Hebe.⁵²

It is tempting to connect these *Iuuenalia* with Domitian's tenure as *Princeps Iuuentutis* ('Prince of Youth'), a post first attested for him and Titus in 69–70 CE and then held by him alone from around 72 CE until his accession in 81 CE.⁵³ This is not a necessary connection (Nero's *Iuuenalia* were unconnected with his pre-accession title of *Princeps Iuuentutis*) and there is no direct evidence for it. But Domitian, frustrated by his inability to play a central public role, does seem to have spent much time at the Alban villa during the 70s CE (cf. Cass. Dio 65.3.4), and he might perhaps have chosen to put some substance into an otherwise honorific title. The *collegium* of Minerva which he created to direct the festival (Suet. *Dom.* 4.4; see above) could have been established at any time before or after his accession, for it will have comprised a group of *cultores* ('ministrants') of the goddess on the traditional model of *collegia* brought together for the purpose of administering specific functions belonging to public cults.⁵⁴ Minerva herself is prominent on early Flavian coinage, as is her representation in the Palladium.⁵⁵ Of interest in this context is a type issued by Domitian as Consul in 79 CE, showing Vesta holding the Palladium and bearing the legend PRINCEPS IUVENTUTIS ('prince of youth').⁵⁶ It illustrates Domitian's interest in his own eventual succession, linked with the *aeternitas* of Rome in Flavian safekeeping.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ Dion. Hal. 3.69.5; Wissowa (1912) 135–6; Richardson (1992) 228.

⁵¹ Wissowa (1912) 136; Latte (1960) 256; *RE* 8.2581–2.

⁵² Lugli (1918) 53–6. For Domitian, Hercules and Hebe, cf. Mart. *Epigr.* 9.65.13.

⁵³ Titus and Domitian: *BMC* 2.7; Domitian: *ILS* 246 (Rome); *CIL* 3.12218 (Cilicia); *ILS* 263 (Galatia).

⁵⁴ *RE* 4.383–5; Wissowa (1912) 404 n. 7, 458, n. 5.

⁵⁵ Scott (1936) 184–5. Palladium: *RE* 18.2.171–189 at 182–5.

⁵⁶ *BMC* 2.46 no. 260.

⁵⁷ Scott (1936) 185.

So the possibility that the private *Iuuenalia* were instituted in honour of Minerva at around this same time, as an advertisement of the same group of ideas, is not to be dismissed out of hand.⁵⁸

The earliest certain reference to the festival seems, however, to be the first epigram of Martial's fourth book, published in 89 CE.⁵⁹ Martial's silence in earlier books may carry no particular significance, but might yet be set beside the findings of von Hesberg's study of the marblework of the Alban theatre, which he dates to between 90 and 93/94 CE.⁶⁰ Taken together, the evidence might suggest some new focus of interest in the festival in the late 80s and early 90s CE, perhaps connected with the new theatre. This would coincide with the separately attested upsurge in imperial interest in poetic encomium at this time and with a cluster of occasional poems by Statius in the period 90/91 CE.⁶¹

We do not know whether poetry and oratory *certamina* ('contests') featured in earlier celebrations at Alba, before the construction of the theatre (P. Annius Florus might have competed with a poem on the Dacian triumph of 86 CE as early as 87 or 88 CE: see below),⁶² but if they were, it is perhaps surprising that Domitian should have presented the literary events in anything other than their designated theatrical setting, particularly since the theatre seems to have been part of the original conception of Domitian's reconstruction work.⁶³ No certain conclusions can be drawn from the available dating evidence, but we are, I think, led towards the possibility that the Alban festival evolved out of earlier, conceivably pre-accession, *ludi iuuenales* ('youth games') into something more elaborate, with the programme of events as we now know it.

⁵⁸ It is not clear whether the Palladium and its Trojan associations played any part in the festival; cf. Mart. *Epigr.* 5.1.1: *Palladiae seu collibus uteris Albae, / Caesar* ('whether you are in the hills of Palladian Alba'), where 'Palladian Alba' might refer both to festival and Palladium; cf. also Mart. *Epigr.* 9.23.2; Stat. *Silv.* 4.2.67.

⁵⁹ Thus the reference (Mart. *Epigr.* 4.11) to the revolt of Antonius Saturninus, initiated on 1 January in that year; Sullivan (1991) 33. For the date, cf., e.g. Syme (1983) 122 (= Syme [1988] 253). *Contra* Citroni (1989) 219–20, who dates the inception of the revolt to December 88 CE, in time for Martial to pen an epigram that was included in his *Saturnalia* edition that year; but aside from the chronological difficulty and the implausibility of an instant epigram on such a subject, this involves impossibly tight timing for book production.

⁶⁰ Von Hesberg (1978–80) 319–20.

⁶¹ Hardie (1996) 276.

⁶² Von Hesberg (1978–80) 319–20.

⁶³ Von Hesberg (1978–80) 319.

This programme is a hybrid, combining traditional Italian events (hunts, gladiators and dramatic games), with Greek-style contests of poets and orators.⁶⁴ The juxtaposition of the two dimensions is brought out in Suetonius' connective, *superque* ('and moreover'). The gladiatorial contests reflect the fighting content of the main, urban celebration of the *Quinquatria* (cf. Cass. Dio 54.28.3 cited above; also Ov. *Fast.* 3.813–14, *Trist.* 4.10.13–14); and for the programme as a whole there are Neronian precedents, for example in the multi-faceted games held at Rome after the murder of Agrippina (Cass. Dio 62.17.2–3). But whatever its origins and history, Domitian's Alban festival seems in its setting, programme and sacral context to have been something fairly new: a conscious amalgam of 'Italian' and 'Greek' and an imperial celebration of a rural version of a great urban festival on private ground.

Martial offers some insights into the possible role in these matters of Domitian's personal cult of Minerva in the period around 90 CE. Seeking the help of Domitian's secretary *a studiis*, Sextus, in getting his new book into the imperial library (5.5), Martial addresses him as *Palatinae cultor facunde Mineruae* ('eloquent ministrant of Palatine Minerva'). Here, *cultor* and *Mineruae* seem to carry figurative force, something like 'devotee' and 'learning' (as at Ov. *Trist.* 2.13–14, 5.3.33–4; cf. *Pont.* 2.9.64), yet *cultor* is a strongly religious word, the technical term for a member of a *collegium* of worshippers of a deity and, given the known existence of Domitian's *collegium* (that is, a *collegium cultorum Mineruae*, 'college of ministrants of Minerva'), we are bound to ask whether some literal sense may underlie this compliment to the emperor's secretary. We cannot know whether Sextus was himself a member of our *collegium*, but this prominent epigram may allow a glimpse into a pattern of sacral-cultural management within Domitian's court, focussed on his personal cult of Minerva on the Palatine and perhaps extending to the management of the Alban festival.⁶⁵ Sextus' literary credentials (*facunde*, 'eloquent') and his role as literary adviser to Domitian (3–4; cf. 7) makes this an

⁶⁴ Ville (1981) 216–270.

⁶⁵ For which, see Scott (1936) 166–92; Nock (1947) 106. *Palatinae Mineruae* ('of Palatine Minerva') might refer to the statue attested for Domitian's private rooms at Suet. *Dom.* 15.3 and Cass. Dio 67.16.1; cf. also Mart. *Epigr.* 5.2.7–8: *quem* [his book] *Germanicus . . . coram Cecropia legat puella* ('which Germanicus may read in the presence of the Cecropian maiden'); Scott (1935) 69–72; Scott (1936) 180–4.

attractive, if unproveable, proposition. Sextus himself might plausibly be imagined as a competitor at Alba.

A scene in the frieze on Domitian's Temple of Minerva in the Forum Transitorium has tentatively been identified as depicting Minerva and the Muses.⁶⁶ In favour of this reading is the rocky landscape (which might conceivably allude, via conventional Heliconian iconography, to the Mons Albanus).⁶⁷ In the same context, Wolfgang Schürmann interpreted the belt on the armed Attic relief of Minerva as an allusion to the so-called 'Theatergürtel' of certain Muse-types and consequently suggested a reference to the Alban festival.⁶⁸ This bold inference remains unconfirmed,⁶⁹ but the combination of an armed and artistic Minerva in the context of the festival is certainly attractive.

Domitian's primary interest in Minerva was as goddess of war, as the remarkably consistent evidence of the coin issues brings out.⁷⁰ This is reflected in Statius' recollection of his Alban victory: *hic mea carmina/regina bellorum uirago/Caesareo redimiuit auro* ('here the maiden queen of wars crowned my poems with Caesar's gold', *Silv.* 4.5.22–4). Statius' prize-winning poem was on Domitian's triumphal campaigns of 89 CE: *modo Germanas acies modo Dacia sonantem/proelia Palladio tua me manus induit auro* ('your hand bestowed on me Pallas' gold, singing now of German conflicts, now of Dacian battles', (*Silv.* 4.2.66–7). We know of a further panegyric by P. Annius Florus, on a Dacian triumph (presumably that of 86 CE), and this too may have been a competition piece for the Alban festival (*clarissimus ille de Dacia triumphus*, 'that most famous Dacian triumph', *Vergilius Orator an Poeta* 1.7);⁷¹ if so, then it would most naturally have been written for performance in 87 or 88 CE and may for that reason be the earliest festival poem of which we have any trace.⁷² The only other testimony

⁶⁶ Athena/Minerva with Muses: *LIMC* 6.1.673, 1011 *s.v.* *Mousa, Mousai* 155 (death of Rhesus), 284; *LIMC* 6.1.1022, 1041, 1042–3 *s.v.* *Musae* 87 (Marsyas), 138, 139–51 (with Apollo, on sarcophagi). Forum Transitorium: Petersen (1889) 88 bases his view on the similarity between one figure and a known Muse type and the presence of a lyre (which I have not been able to spot on photographs); accepted by Girard (1981) 238.

⁶⁷ For the landscape, cf. Pinkwart (1965) 78–83.

⁶⁸ Schürmann (1985) 12–13.

⁶⁹ Rejected by D'Ambra (1993) 126.

⁷⁰ Girard (1981) 241–2; Scott (1936) 176–7; Morawiecki (1977) 185–93.

⁷¹ For Domitian's triumphs, see Jones (1992) 138–9.

⁷² Statius' *De Bello Germanico* can be discounted as too long for competitive purposes: Hardie (1983) 61; Coleman (1986) xvii n. 13.

to an Alban victory derives from Martial's twinned epigrams to Carus (9.23–4). This can be assumed to have been won in the poetry or oratory events (it is unclear which), and Martial evidently anticipates a future victory in the *Capitolia*, but we have no clear clues as to the content of what he declaimed.⁷³

There is insufficient data here to establish definite conclusions, but so far as it goes, the evidence is consistent with a primary focus on Domitian's wars, which would in turn connect with Minerva as war goddess, Statius' *regina bellorum uirago* ('maiden queen of wars'). The goddess herself might easily have been worked into martial epic, as protectress of Domitian and guarantor of the *salus imperii* ('safety of the empire').⁷⁴ If this is correct, then in its overall ideological conception Domitian's Alban festival is best paralleled by Gordian III's *Agon Minervae* ('Contest of Minerva'), held before the emperor's departure for a Parthian expedition in the early 240s CE. As Louis Robert has shown, that festival honoured Athena Promachos, champion of the Athenians at Marathon, in order to secure her protection for Gordian's new Persian war.⁷⁵

Panegyric epic on martial achievement was traditionally popular at Rome; its status as the subject of a competitive festival has its origins in the Greek east (cf., e.g., Plut. *Pomp.* 42). The genre found particular favour under the Flavians. Statius' father composed a poem on the civil war immediately after the Flavian victory. Statius (*Silv.* 5.3.195–204) says that this poem was recited to a civic audience, in front of Vespasian (*Caesar*, 204), and there is a suggestion in Jupiter's 'nod of approval from the middle of the fire' (204) that it was recited on the Capitoline, within sight of the god's cult statue. This high-profile event signals the role of poetry in the Flavians' early efforts to shape opinion and sustain legitimacy. Domitian wrote an epic on the same subject and he may also have essayed Titus' exploits in the east.⁷⁶ Early in Domitian's reign Statius composed the *De Bello*

⁷³ *Inuictum* . . . *caput* ('undefeated head'; the bust of Domitian on which Carus' crown reposes) will have some bearing on the matter either on Carus as victor or perhaps on the content of his praise of Domitian. *Capitolia*: Mart. *Epigr.* 9.23.5–6 with Friedländer (1886) 2.61.

⁷⁴ Compare Claudianus' comparison of Roma and Minerva at *Panegyricus Dictus Olybrio et Probino Consulibus* 83–99 (for the shared characteristics of Roma and Minerva, cf. *LMC* 2.1.1108).

⁷⁵ Robert (1970) 11–17.

⁷⁶ Coleman (1986) 3090–1.

Germanico ('On the German War'), which celebrated the continuity of the Flavian order and the new emperor's capacity for military command.⁷⁷ By 89 CE, the revolt of Antonius Saturninus had shaken the regime's self-confidence, prompting Domitian's personal intervention and campaigns that were celebrated in a double triumph at the end of the year.⁷⁸ The latter event was stage-managed by L. Arruntius Stella, Domitian's impresario and the dedicatee of Statius' first book.⁷⁹ In the same year, the sequence of published *Silvae* opens and Martial emerges more clearly as a Flavian propagandist.⁸⁰ Also in 89 CE, as has been noted above, the Alban festival is first acknowledged in Martial's published verse. It may not be fanciful to see in these various phenomena some reflection of the regime's requirement for supportive performances in the public and private domains.

Recitations took place in the Alban villa theatre. This was a richly ornamented structure.⁸¹ Stucco relief panels displayed figures broadly appropriate to the performance of drama and musical items: Dionysus, Muses, including Melpomene with tragic mask, Medea and (as already noted above) Hercules and Hebe.⁸² It was an intimate setting, in the tradition of small villa-theatres.⁸³ With a *cauea* radius of between only eleven and twelve metres, it cannot have held more than about 450 spectators. Attendance will not have been open to all and the audience for the musical events must have been invited. When Statius speaks of Septimius Severus' support at the contest, he is therefore complimenting him on his inclusion in an elite audience, and Septimius will have owed his invitation to his known literary interests, which are duly advertised in Statius' poem (*Silv.* 4.5.57–60). Indeed, we might without strain imagine most of the addressees of the *Silvae* receiving similar imperial invitations. Competitors too will presumably have participated by invitation.⁸⁴

The *Iuuenalia* thus present a striking contrast with the *Capitolia*, offering an overtly political agenda and drawing together an elite

⁷⁷ To be inferred from Juvenal's fourth Satire: Hardie (1997–98) 117–44, esp. 124–5.

⁷⁸ Jones (1992) 144–52.

⁷⁹ Hardie (1996) 275–6.

⁸⁰ Merli (1993) 241.

⁸¹ Lugli (1914) 21–53; Magi (1973–74) 63–77; von Hesberg (1978–80) 305–24.

⁸² Lugli (1914) 32–53; Lugli (1918) 40–57.

⁸³ Villa-theatres: Hanson (1959) 72–3; Modona (1961) 82.

⁸⁴ Such invitations will have been command performances: cf. Cass. Dio 67.14.3 on Glabrio.

audience for a festival focussed as much on Domitian as on his protecting goddess.⁸⁵

4. *Statius at the Iuvenalia and Capitolia*

Martial's references to the *Capitolia* open in book 4 (December 89 CE) with the prominent juxtaposition of the Alban, Capitoline and Saecular festivals (1.5–8) and two epigrams (20 and 54) addressed to a victor three years earlier in 86 CE (Collinus: probably, but not necessarily, a poet). The sense of anticipation of the second *Capitolia* is sustained in the Ponticus epigram in the next book (5.63; see above, sec. 2). Four years later, the third celebration attracts rather more attention, in book 9. We find the Alban victory of the poet Carus, for whom Martial anticipates a Capitoline crown (23.5–6); gossip about likely victors (35.10); the shipwreck of an Alexandrian competitor, Diodorus (40);⁸⁶ and further passing references to the crown (3.8, 101.22). This is lively stuff and may well have been prompted by court interests, but Martial speaks as an observer and not as a competitor.

Statius, by contrast, gives us a sense of the festival's significance to a contestant who had personal experience of the Greek background. He recalls his own career as a performing poet and his father's presence as *spectator* at *Silvae* 5.3.215–33. He moves from recitation to competition and refers to three festivals (225–33), the *Sebasta*, the Alban festival and the *Capitolia*. He regrets that his father witnessed only his Neapolitan victory and did not see that at Alba:

ei mihi quod tantum patrias ego uertice frondes
 solaue Chalcidicae Cerealia dona coronae
 te sub teste tuli! qualem te Dardanus Albae
 uix cepisset ager, si per me certa tulisses
 Caesarea donata manu! quod subdere robur
 illa dies, quantum potuit dempsisse senectae!

(Statius, *Silvae* 5.3.225–30)

⁸⁵ For the hostile reaction which *laudes imperatoris* ('praise of the emperor') at the games might draw, cf. Plin. *Pan.* 54.1.

⁸⁶ The joke in *tardus . . . et piger maritus* ('slow and sluggish husband', 9.40) lies partly in the fact that shipwreck was an acceptable excuse for a competitor's late arrival: cf. *Inscr. Olymp.* 56.24–5.

Alas for me that in your presence I only carried our native wreath on my brow and only Ceres' gift of the Chalcidic crown! How you would have been, scarcely containable in the Dardan field of Alba, had you won, through me, garlands given by the hand of Caesar! What vigour that day could have restored to you and how much of your old age it could have sloughed off!

These lines are central to the chronology of Statius' career, for they have been taken to suggest that his father was dead by the time of the Alban festival.⁸⁷ If that is the case, then there is an irreconcilable discrepancy with the claimed date of composition of *Silvae* 5.3, three months after the death during which Statius wrote nothing (thus, 29–33). If, on the other hand, Statius father was alive but did not attend, the difficulty falls away and the father's death can be dated with confidence to a later month (around September 90 CE).

I have argued that the elder Statius was still alive in March 90 CE, but did not witness the Alban victory.⁸⁸ That view may briefly be re-stated and amplified. Statius is deploying the topic of the vicarious experience of the spectator who identifies himself empathetically with the competitive efforts of a protegee, to the extent that he actually lives the experience himself: Statius' father would thus himself have 'won' the Alban crown had he actually been present to witness the occasion.⁸⁹ The entire passage has to do simply and solely with the father's physical presence (or rather, absence) as a witness and there is no suggestion in the text that he was dead at the time of the performance. There are other possible explanations for his absence, including the old age and infirmity of which Statius goes on to speak. In doing so, I would suggest that he deploys the motif of the rejuvenation of the 'old poet' familiar from Callimachus, *Aetia* frag. 1.33–6 and going back to an ancient tradition ascribing rebirth and 'double youth' to Hesiod.⁹⁰ A version preserved in a Latin *scholium* had it that as an old man, Hesiod ascended Helicon and received from the Muses a crown by which he was rejuvenated: *Hesiodus poeta*,

⁸⁷ Coleman (1988) xvii–xix; Garthwaite (1989) 81–91; *contra* Hardie (1983) 13–14, 62–3. In my view, it is implausible that Statius should have failed to notice dating discrepancies within *Silv.* 5.3 or to have made later additions without fully integrating them into his existing text.

⁸⁸ Hardie (1983) 13–14.

⁸⁹ For the topic, cf. Stat. *Silv.* 3.5.31–3 (*necum uicta*, 'vanquished with me'), 4.5.25–8, 5.3.217–24.

⁹⁰ On what follows see Scodel (1980) 301–20.

cum iam . . . senesceret, in Helicon . . . subiit ibique a Musis coronam . . . dicitur accepisse, qua indutus caput iuuenis factus est ('When the poet Hesiod was growing old, he climbed up Helicon and is said there to have received a crown from the Muses. When he donned it, he became a youth', *Scholia Bernensia ad Virg. Ecl.* 6.70). The association of Muses, song and the coronal (*corona/stephanos*, 'crown') with rejuvenation is also strikingly represented in Euripides' *Heracles*, where the chorus of 'old singers' further link it with Heracles' victories (673–86). Statius modifies this conceptual nexus: the crown with which he had been honoured by Caesar would have rejuvenated his old father, had he been physically present to empathise with the action of being crowned. The conceit may gain further point from the 'youthful' connotations of the Alban festival itself (that is, the *Iuuenalia*). All of this is perfectly consistent with Statius' father being alive at the time. If he had witnessed Statius' crowning, he would still be alive.

A more difficult question arises over Statius' participation in the *Capitolia*. Did he compete and lose only once, as is generally assumed? Nothing seems to preclude two attempts at the Capitoline crown, since Statius speaks only in general terms of his failure to win, not of the specific moment of defeat in any particular celebration (*Silv.* 3.5.31–3, 5.3.231–3). Indeed the imperfect tense with which he describes his wife's grieving over his failure (*dolebas*, 3.5.32) would, if it is the right reading, be consistent with more than one defeat. Aside from debilitating illness or imperial disfavour, there seems no obvious reason why Statius should not have entered the first celebration of an event which so completely embraced his epideictic skills and professional background;⁹¹ there would be still less reason for dodging the contest after the Alban victory in 90 CE. Competition and failure at two celebrations, in 86 and 90 CE, remains a possibility.

Why did the most prominent Latin poet of the Flavian age fail to win the Capitoline crown? Various explanations suggest themselves. Competition in the performing arts was a hazardous business; judgements were bound to be subjective; much might depend on one's place in the draw for order of performance;⁹² the crowd would

⁹¹ The hypothesis of disfavour arising from a relationship with Paris, advanced in Hardie (1983) 63, remains possible.

⁹² *Anth. Pal.* 11.128.3 (ironical): χαίρω, νῆ τὸν κλῆρον, ὃν εὐκλήρησας ἐν ἄθλοις ('I rejoice [sc. in your victory crown] by the lot that you happily drew in the contest'); addressed to a Florus, possibly identical with P. Annius Florus.

have its favourites;⁹³ and there was always the risk of being upstaged by one of the child prodigies whom these festivals seem to have attracted.⁹⁴ But the suspicion naturally arises that Statius lost because Domitian willed it so. Certainly Domitian's reactions will have been evident to the judges (presumably the *Sodales Flaviales*) and must have been influential on their conclusions. Martial implies as much in his teasing of 'Ponticus' (5.63; see above, sec. 2). P. Annius Florus was later to allege that he had been denied the crown because Domitian was unwilling to let it go to a competitor from Africa (*Vergilius Orator an Poeta* 1.4). Whether or not this was true, it is valuable evidence for the kind of suspicions and accusations which were circulated by 'sore losers' in the febrile atmosphere of the games circuit; it ascribes to Domitian an essentially political motivation for his interference with the verdict, hostile to Africa and by implication favouring competitors from the Spanish or Gallic provinces or from Italy.

Statius' reference to his wife grieving about 'harsh and ungrateful Jupiter' (*saeuum ingratumque . . . Iouem*, *Silv.* 3.5.32–3) in reaction to his defeat has been taken as an indirect attack on Domitian.⁹⁵ In my view, it is inherently unlikely that in the emperor's lifetime Statius should imply genuine criticism for malign interference in the judges' decision. But it is of course true that Statius and Martial frequently speak of Domitian as a terrestrial 'Jupiter' and the Domitian/Jupiter association was a feature of the *Capitolia*, so the possibility of a double reference to god and emperor cannot automatically be dismissed.⁹⁶ On the other hand, Statius has just made a favourable reference to Domitian in the context of the Alban victory (*Caesaris*, 29), so that any implication of personal bias seems to be excluded. Moreover, he is here speaking of a kind of *consolatio*, in which his wife, sharing his dismay, utters a *schetliasmus* ('attack on a god') upbraiding Jupiter as 'harsh and ungrateful', that is, for his failure to reward Statius' *laudes*.⁹⁷ There is perhaps some humour in the intensity of

⁹³ For crowd reaction, see Suet. *Nero* 10.2, 20.3 (hired claqueurs), 21.2; *Vit.* 4; *Dom.* 13.1; Stat. *Silv.* 5.3.136–7; *IGUR* 1336 B 2–4; Florus, *Vergilius Orator an Poeta* 1.4.

⁹⁴ Lana (1951) 157–60 wrongly concludes that there was a boys' poetry event.

⁹⁵ Garthwaite (1989) 88–90.

⁹⁶ Mart. *Epigr.* 9.35.10 (*destinet aetherius cui suaserta pater*, 'for whom the celestial father destines his wreaths') suggests the real Jupiter; for presiding god as giver of the prize, cf. Stat. *Silv.* 4.5.22–4.

⁹⁷ For the force of *ingratus* ('ungrateful') of the subject of encomium, cf. *Silv.* 2.7.58–9: *ingratus Nero . . . proferetur* ('ungrateful Nero will be brought forward') with

his wife's empathy and schetliastic reaction, but since Domitian was not the subject of panegyric at the *Capitolia*, there need be no jibe at his supposed 'ingratitude'.

There may, however, be another explanation for Statius' failure to win the Capitoline crown. More than any other contemporary figure known to us, Statius embodies the Greco-Roman spirit of Domitian's games. The mass audience, poetry as spectacle, the new acoustics of the concert hall-*odeia*, and the challenge of competition with the finest professional *virtuosi* of the age had been part and parcel of his Neapolitan training. He had seen his father perform a panegyric epic, under the gaze of the statue of Capitoline Jupiter, at a critical moment in the early fortunes of the Flavian dynasty. With the accession of Domitian, Statius advanced to civic prominence with his own panegyrics for a new emperor, as also into intimacy with Domitian's impresario, L. Arruntius Stella. And as Domitian conceived the idea of a spectacular festival at Rome, it seems entirely possible that Statius' father might have been involved in some way in its design or stage management.⁹⁸ By 86 CE or at least by 90 CE, Statius must have been among the hot favourites to win the crown for Latin poetry. Equally, Domitian might have been forgiven for asking himself what message a victory by a court insider would have sent to the western provinces whose engagement in his new cultural enterprise he so much wished to foster. Home wins, as Statius acknowledges of his father's Neapolitan victories, were easy (*Silv.* 5.3.141–5).⁹⁹ Florus' later suggestion of bias against Africa shows how readily accusations of prejudice might circulate. Domitian, I suggest, would be unwilling to court suspicion of home bias in the judging; nor will he have had any interest in underlining the superiority of the capital over the provinces in the matter of letters and literary attainment. He might therefore have had good political reasons to direct the prize away from Rome. Palfurius Sura might be cited as a

reference to Lucan's declamation of his prizewinning *Laudes Neronis* and suggesting the ingratitude of its subject. For consolatory material on competitive defeat, cf. *Anth. Pal.* 9.565 (Callimachus); for 'sore losers' complaints of injustice, see *Anth. Pal.* 9.566.5.

⁹⁸ Nero made use of the administrative talents of officials at the Neapolitan Games: Jacopi (1932) 2.212 no. 49; Hardie (1983) 12.

⁹⁹ See Hardie (1983) 7 for statistical support for this view from the *Mouseia* Games at Thespieae.

counter-example.¹⁰⁰ Yet his victory provoked a favourable crowd reaction which seems to have displeased Domitian (Suet. *Dom.* 13.1), and the circumstances which led to it are unclear; he does not invalidate the proposition that Domitian would have had reason for caution about a Roman victory in the Latin poetry competition. Statius' defeat (or defeats) and the victory of a lesser poet in 86 CE (Collinus) should perhaps have come as no great surprise; indeed, Statius' later references to his *repulsa* might fairly be read as indirect testimony to the 'fairness' of the judging in this first all-empire event of its kind, *in illo orbis terrarum conciliabulo*. The Alban festival, more intimate and more personal to Domitian, will represent a better guide to his judgement of literary merit, and here Statius' panegyric was crowned with success.

¹⁰⁰ See above, sec. 2.

5. SLAVE-BOYS FOR SEXUAL AND RELIGIOUS SERVICE: IMAGES OF PLEASURE AND DEVOTION

John Pollini

From the literary, epigraphic and archaeological record, we know much about the institution of slavery in the Roman period, but far less about the way in which slaves were represented in art. In some instances, of course, they can be identified by context, as in the banqueting scene in a Pompeian painting showing typical slave-boys dressed in tunics, serving guests at a Roman banquet.¹ In most cases, however, they are not so readily identifiable, especially in the early imperial period when hairstyles and even dress of slave-boys and freeborn boys might appear similar in art. Although there are numerous inscribed grave reliefs with images of ex-slaves, or freedmen, there are relatively few portraits representing individuals while they were slaves, since most did not have the means to set up likenesses of themselves. And even if they did, the majority would probably not have wanted to be portrayed in a way that would reveal their servile status or their servile origins after they had gained their freedom.² There are, consequently, not many representations of readily identifiable slaves and even fewer portrait images of them.

In this essay, I shall be concerned principally with images of slave-‘boys’ in the later Julio-Claudian and Flavian periods. Besides

¹ From a house at Pompeii (V.2.4), now in the Naples National Museum (inv. 120029): see Ward-Perkins and Claridge (1978) 2.198 no. 244. For an excellent large colour photograph, see Dalby and Grainger (1996) 99. For a literary description of one such Roman banquet, see Philo’s account in his *De Vita Contemplativa* 48–52 (cited below). For the high status of these wine pourers, see D’Arms (1991) esp. 173–4. D’Arms, however, does not include the important passage from Philo regarding these slave-boys.

² The notable exception to the latter was the fictional character Trimalchio in Petronius’ *Satyricon*, who had himself represented as a slave in a biographical cycle of paintings that decorated the interior walls near the entrance of his house (*Sat.* 29). However, this fictive painting cycle was part of Petronius’ biting satirical commentary on this rich and gauche freedman. Of the many wall paintings that have survived in Roman houses, no biographical cycle of paintings of a freedman’s ‘career’, such those described by Petronius, are known to me.

designating a male as opposed to a female, the Latin word for 'boy', *puer*, has essentially two meanings: a prepubertal free-born boy or a male slave, who may be a boy, a teenager, or a mature male.³ Unlike a free-born *puer*, whose age range was fixed in Roman law between seven and fourteen,⁴ the age range of a slave *puer* was not limited chronologically.⁵ In this sense, the Latin word *puer* is similar to the term 'boy' as commonly used in the *antebellum* South for a male slave.⁶ I shall focus here on a type of slave-boy in the Roman period called a *delicatus*, who was generally a favourite, pretty-boy, 'pet' slave. The most desirable ones combined both androgynous beauty and intelligence.⁷ In Latin literature these *delicati* are also sometimes called *glabri* (smooth-skinned), *effeminati* (effeminate), *concubini* (bed-fellows) and *exoleti* (catamites).⁸ Such slave-boys were generally known for their playful, coy and wanton behaviour. Martial, for example, refers to them as *lasciui capillati* ('wanton long-haired ones', i.e., slaves, *Epigr.* 3.58.30–1; see also Mart. *Epigr.* 1.31; Sen. *Ep.* 95.24). These pretty-boy *delicati* were often the preferred sex-objects in acts of homosexual love-making between master and slave.⁹

Although sometimes represented as generic types¹⁰ or in a few

³ According to the late Latin jurist Paulus, the term *puer*, or 'boy', has three meanings in Latin: *unam, cum omnes seruos pueros appellaremus; alteram, cum puerum contrario nomine puellae diceremus; tertiam, cum aetatem puerilem demonstraremus* ('first, all those whom we call slaves; second, a male in contradistinction to a girl; and third, that which we characterise as one in his boyhood years', *Dig.* 50.16.204).

⁴ Néraudau (1984) 48–53; Wiedemann (1989) 114 with nn. 3, 17; Cantarella (1992) 118.

⁵ See further Néraudau (1984) 48–53; Cantarella (1992) 118 *et passim*.

⁶ The word 'boy' has, of course, continued on in English as a derogatory term implying 'servile' subordination, commonly employed for black males, but also sometimes for white males.

⁷ Moehler (1940) 269–70.

⁸ See, e.g., Richlin (1992a) 34–44, 221, 223 *et passim* and her *index verborum*; Fless (1995) 95 *et passim*. For the evidence of the *effeminatus* in the ancient Greek and Roman sources, see *RAC* 4 (1959) 620–42.

⁹ Here, I use the term 'homosexual', rather than the more faddish expression 'male-male' commonly employed in modern gender studies. I employ 'homosexual' only as an adjective to describe a same-sex sexual act, rather than as a substantive to stand for an individual who is attracted exclusively to the same sex. Although homosexuality has always existed, it is virtually impossible to know from literature or art whether a person in Roman society was exclusively homosexual, since the norm for most peoples in antiquity was 'ambisexual', in that they were attracted to both sexes. For the issue of 'homosexuality' in the ancient world and the misuse of the term 'bisexuality' for 'ambisexuality' in contemporary society, see my fuller discussion: Pollini (1999) 22–8.

¹⁰ See, for example, on the 'Warren Cup' below.

portrait images, *delicati* are generally not well known in art and/or have often been misidentified in the past as girls because of their female-like, or 'feminised', hairstyles. Usually under the influence of the hairdos of leading female members of the *princeps'* family, these feminised male servile hairstyles varied over time. A *terminus post quem* can often be established at least for some of the more typical iconographical hairstyles,¹¹ but because of overlapping with and revivals of earlier coiffures, a fixed chronology based on hairstyles is far more difficult to determine. What can be established is a loose relative chronology indicating the range of time that servile feminised hair types were in use. Other stylistic elements or findspots can sometimes narrow that dating.

Of particular interest with regard to the *delicatus* type is a long misidentified marble portrait of a male with long hair acquired in 1913 by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (figs 7–10).¹² Until very recently,¹³ the Metropolitan head had been mentioned in print only very briefly by G. M. A. Richter, Curator of Greek and Roman Art at the Museum: first in 1914 and then again in 1948.¹⁴ Both times she concluded that because of the long hair this portrait was evidently a Roman representation of a barbarian. As we shall see, however, his rather distinctive hairstyle is of a type not worn by free barbarians, but by androgynous-looking slave-boys. The age and facial features of the individual represented in the Metropolitan portrait nevertheless do not fit the norms of the popular, pretty-boy *delicatus* type.

The Metropolitan sculpture, which is of relatively high quality and is said to have come from Rome, portrays a rugged-looking individual with mature features. The head is carved in the form of a shallow square tenon for insertion into a mortise (or cavity) in the

¹¹ Pollini (1999) 30–1, 34 with further discussion and references.

¹² Purchased from the Rogers Fund. Mus. inv. 13.229.5. Richter (1914) 63 (without photograph); Richter (1948) 3 (unpaginated) no. 61 with two photographs. The marble is white with a yellowish patina for the most part, although some greyish-bluish areas of patina are also evident. The sculpture is preserved to a height of 35 cm. (c. 13 in.), while the distance from the chin to the top of the head is 23.5 cm. (c. 9 in.). The head was broken in two from beneath the level of the chin and reattached with a cementing agent; plaster fill is evident at the back and sides (pls 2–4). I thank Elizabeth Milleker for checking the Museum's files on this head.

¹³ Cf. more recently Amedick (1991) 391; Cain (1993) 182–3 no. 63, pls 43–4 (last years of the first century CE); Fless (1995) 67–8 with n. 496.

¹⁴ See Richter (1948) 3 (unpaginated) no. 61 and above, n. 12.

upper part of a marble statue body or a marble bust.¹⁵ Except for some breaks and weathering, the surface is in relatively good condition.¹⁶ The summary carving of the top and back of the head indicates that this portrait was once set against a wall or in a niche. The facial features are well modelled, with an illusionistic effect produced by the play of light and shadow over the fluctuating surfaces of the face. The powerful bone structure, strong aquiline nose, prominent cheek bones, fleshy lips and heavy chin add character to the portrait. The youth's rugged, unhandsome face is enframed by a row of distinctive sickle-shaped hair locks, while long, thick, wavy locks, covering the entire back of the head and concealing both ears, undulate down onto his now missing shoulders.¹⁷ His virile features and the sharp turn and inclination of his head combine to heighten the psychological content of the portrait. The hairstyle and stylistic manner of carving suggest that this rather unique portrait most likely dates to the later Flavian period or possibly to the early Trajanic age.¹⁸ After further discussion of the *delicatus* type and the functions of such slave-boys, I shall return to the Metropolitan portrait to suggest the possible role in Roman society of the individual portrayed and the reasons for his representation.

Slave-boys with Feminised Hairstyles

Portrayals of male adolescents with seemingly female hairdos have often been mistakenly identified as representations of girls, as in the case of a marble portrait of late Neronian-Flavian date in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence (figs 11–12),¹⁹ another marble portrait in the

¹⁵ For mortise-and-tenon joins in sculpture: Claridge (1990) 142–4.

¹⁶ The surface of the marble of the entire head and hair is mottled with encrustations here and there, especially at the back of the head. Root marks are also to be found in a number of places. The tip of the nose and left cheek are abraded and the central portion of the reverse-comma shaped locks over the forehead are somewhat worn down. The entire surface of the marble at the nape of the neck is worn and weathered. In this area, too, are pit holes, indicating that this part of the marble had been in contact with some ground water.

¹⁷ At the nape of the neck the hair is cut horizontally. The rest of the long hair locks at the back would have been carved in the upper back part of the torso, into which the section of head would have been set. The line of the join would have then been masked by paint.

¹⁸ Cain (1993) 182–3; Fless (1995) 109 (cat. 32).

¹⁹ Mus. inv. 1914.57; Mansuelli (1961) 69 no. 63 (late Neronian-early Flavian).

round of Flavian-Trajanic date formerly in the Heyl collection in Darmstadt,²⁰ and a figure in a State relief in the Museo Gregoriano Profano in the Vatican (figs 13–14).²¹ Although restored in part, the high beehive-bonnet hairstyle of the boy in the Vatican relief is found in later Flavian and earlier Trajanic portraits like that of Domitian's wife Domitia in the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg.²² Although this and other feminised coiffures worn by male sacrificial attendants resemble comparable female hairstyles, they differ from them in certain respects, most notably in the long shoulder-length hair locks that the male figures wear across the entire back of the head. In true female hairstyles, by contrast, the hair is generally bound up at the back of the head in a bun, sometimes with one or two long, shoulder-length hair tresses worn behind the ears. Very rarely are women shown with long loose tresses covering the back of the head.²³

Certain young males with feminised hairstyles were associated with special ceremonial functions. The slave-boy in the Vatican relief is a sacrificial *minister* (ministrant). Based on the literary, epigraphic and archaeological evidence, youthful priestly attendants during the empire, sometimes incorrectly called *camilli*, appear to have been largely of servile status.²⁴ These *ministri* performed at both public and private sacrifices. In the private sphere they also commonly served at the master's table. Sacrifice and service at table went hand in hand, as

Mansuelli took this portrait as that of an unknown woman. Compare, however, Saladino (1983) 36 no. 13, who saw it as a young girl (Neronian-early Flavian), and Simon (1986) 119 fig. 157, who realised that the portrait represented a male, identified it as a *camillus*, or sacrificial assistant, and dated it to the time of Nero. See also Fless (1995) 63–4, 66–7, pl. 31; Pollini (1999) 34, figs 17–18.

²⁰ The present location of the head is unknown. See Arndt and Amelung (1893–1940), 3744–6; Langlotz and Bulle (1930) 4.23; Fless (1995) 67, pl. 30.1–2; Pollini (1999) 34–5, figs 19–20. Based on the published photographs, the portrait appears to have been in the form of a bust.

²¹ Museo Gregoriano Profano, inv. 9481: Benndorf and Schöne (1867) 24 no. 35 apparently took the head of the so-called *camillus* (sacrificial assistant) as not belonging because of the erroneous conclusion that the coiffure of the *camillus* was female. The museum label wrongly calls the figure a *camilla*. Ryberg (1955) 196, pl. 67.116b rightly recognises the figure as male and dates the relief to the Flavian period. See also Koepfel (1985) 146–7, 166–7 (cat. 5), fig. 7 (no. 2), who dates this relief to the Trajanic period; Pollini (1999) 34. Compare two portrait heads of slave-boys with a similar hairstyle: Fless (1995) 68–9, pl. 35.2 (in Athens); pls 34–35.1 (Fano).

²² Vostchinina (1974) 153 no. 24, pls 34–5.

²³ For a few of these more exceptional types, see Cain (1993) 69 with n. 163.

²⁴ See in general Fless (1995) and Pollini (1999) with further bibliography. For the often incorrect usage of *camillus* for a servile *minister* under the empire, see Fless (1995) 43–50 *passim* and Pollini (forthcoming).

household worship centred around meals. In one of his letters (*Ep.* 47.7), Seneca describes a typical slave who serves wine (*alius uini minister*) at a master's banquet as an adolescent slave-boy *in muliebre modum ornatus* ('adorned in a womanly manner'). Although this phrase does not specifically refer to the hairstyle, the Latin verb *ornare* is commonly used with both hairdos and make-up. This sort of literary evidence is supported by the visual evidence. For example, on a funerary altar of Quintus Socconius Felix in the courtyard of the Palazzo Istituto Romano dei Beni Stabili in Rome (fig. 15)²⁵ three generic slave-boys serve at table, but here the meal is associated with a ritual banquet of the dead because of the funereal context of this monument. All three slave-boys sport feminised hairstyles of the Flavian and Trajanic periods.

In his *De Vita Contemplativa* written in the 30s/40s, Philo of Alexandria distinguishes slaves-boys of three different age groups and comments on their appearance and functions at some of the more opulent banquets.²⁶ He relates the following:

διακονικά, ἀνδράποδα εὐμορφότατα καὶ περικαλλέστατα, ὡς ἀφιγμένα οὐχ ὑπηρεσίας ἕνεκα μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ φανέντα τὴν τῶν θεωμένων ὄψιν ἡδύναι· τούτων οἱ μὲν παῖδες ἔτι ὄντες οἰνοχοοῦσιν, ὑδροφοροῦσι δὲ βοῦπαιδες λελουμένοι καὶ λελειασμένοι, [οἱ] τὰ τε πρόσωπα ἐντρίβονται καὶ ὑπογράφονται καὶ τῆς τῆς κεφαλῆς τρίχας εὖ πως διαπλέκονται σφηκούμενοι· βαθυχαῖται γάρ εἰσιν ἢ μὴ κειρόμενοι τὸ παράπαν ἢ τὰς προμεταπιδίους αὐτὸ μόνον ἐξ ἄκρων εἰς ἐπανάσσωσιν καὶ γραμμῆς κυκλοτεροῦς ἡκριβωμένον σχῆμα· χιτῶνάς τε ἀραχνούφεις καὶ ἐκλεύκους ἐπαναζωσάμενοι, τὰ μὲν ἐμπρόσθια κατωτέρω τῶν ὑπὸ γόνυ τὰ δὲ κατόπιν μικρὸν ὑπὸ τοῖς γονατίοις, ἐκάτερον δὲ μέρος οὐλοτέραις ταῖς σειραίαις ἐπιδιπλώσει κατὰ τὴν τῶν χιτωνίσκων, συμβολὴν συστέλλοντες ἐκ πλαγίων κόλπους ἀποιωροῦσιν, εὐρύνοντες τὰ κοῖλα τῶν πλευρῶν. ἐφεδρεύουσι δ' ἄλλοι, μειράκια πρωτογένεια, τοὺς ἰούλους ἄρτι ἀνθοῦντες, ἀθύρματα πρὸ μικροῦ παιδεραστῶν γεγονότες, ἡσκημένοι σφόδρα περιέργως πρὸς τὰς βαρυτέρας ὑπηρεσίας . . .

(Philo, *De Vita Contemplativa* 50–2)

²⁵ Goethert (1969) 79–86, figs 1–11, pls 50–6.

²⁶ See Szesnat (1998) 87–107, who deals with Philo's highly biased views on Greek and Roman sexual preferences.

Those serving [at the banquet] are slaves of the most comely form and beauty, so that one might think that they have come not so much to serve as to please the eyes of their beholders by their very presence. Some of them who are still only boys²⁷ pour wine, while older 'boys'²⁸ carry water, [the latter] having been washed and smoothly rubbed [with unguents²⁹ and] with their faces smeared with cosmetics, their lower eyelids painted, and the hair of their head nicely plaited in some way being tightly bound up. For their long thick hair is either not cut at all or their forelocks alone are cut off at the tips to make them of equal length and of a pattern precisely arranged in an arcing line.³⁰ They wear very white, fine-spun tunics girt up high, the front part hanging down below the knee, the back part, a little below the bend of the knees, and joining together each part along the juncture of the tunics with bows of twisted strings³¹ they let the folds hang down obliquely, broadening out the hollows of the flanks. And waiting their turn [at service] are others—older lads with their first beards recently blooming with down, who a short while ago were the playthings of pederasts—decked out in overly elaborately clothes for the heavier dinner service. . . .

In his discussion, Philo notes that the second group of slave-boys with long hair wore a fringe of equally clipped hair locks that formed an arc over their foreheads. These are the sickle-shaped locks that are commonly represented in Roman art in a number of feminised

²⁷ That is, prepubertal boys definitely under the age of twelve, probably by several years.

²⁸ Literally 'big boys', or adolescents, that is, those who are just pubertal or post-pubertal. Based on Strato in the *Anth. Pal.* 12.4, these were probably boys about twelve to fifteen years of age. This age range was deemed the most desirable for most pederasts.

²⁹ Most likely scented oil-based unguents. The Greek *λελειασμένοι* is sometimes translated 'smoothly shaven' (see, e.g., Fless [1995] 59 'glatt rasierte'). However, *λεανίνω* or *λειανών* means 'I polish' or 'I smoothly rub'. One of the reasons why these *βούπαιδες* ('adolescents') were so sought after by pederasts was that they had not yet sprouted the coarse (ugly) facial hair (beard) associated with manhood.

³⁰ The meaning of the phrase *τάς προμετωπιδίους αὐτὸ μόνον ἐξ ἄκρων εἰς ἐπ'ανίσωσιν καὶ γραμμῆς κυκλοτεροῦς ἡκριβωμένον σχῆμα* has posed problems for translators. Based on such known hairstyles, I would be inclined to interpret this phrase as meaning that the forelocks, which are cut to equal lengths, will form an arc corresponding to the natural arc of the hairline over the forehead. For examples and further discussion, see below.

³¹ Literally, 'doubled over (= bows of) twisted strings.'

hairstyles worn by slave-boys. One of our earliest visual documents for such a hairstyle is a funerary altar in the Museo Nazionale Romano (fig. 16) that has generally been dated to the Claudian era, most likely to the early Claudian period,³² roughly coinciding with the time that Philo was writing. Appearing on two sides of this funerary altar are four slave-boys, three of whom wear long, shoulder length hair tresses with sickle-shaped bangs over their foreheads—a hairstyle similar to that worn by the rugged-looking male represented in the Metropolitan Museum. Some of the objects that these boy ministrants carry are specifically used in both public and private sacrifices, but in this case, they are connected with domestic worship.

A Roman master's preference for pretty slave-boys who were androgynous in appearance explains to a large degree why they came to wear feminised hair styles, be 'dolled up' with makeup, and be finely dressed. A slave-boy with a feminised hairstyle would be in accord with the passive, woman-like roles these boys played in sexual intercourse with their masters. As homosexual love-making became more openly socially acceptable and even fashionable, some Roman men might have felt psychologically that having sex with another male was more acceptable if the love object resembled a woman. It seems to me that there would have been another, more practical reason for creating and perpetuating this girlish-looking *delicatus* type; namely, to facilitate distinguishing between slave- and free-born boys, given the taboos against having sex with free-born Roman males.³³ There is ample testimony in the literary record about the concerns of Roman parents about their unsupervised sons being preyed upon by pederasts.³⁴

In differentiating between servile and freeborn boys, Seneca provides some important information in another letter in which he moralises about some of these young slave-boys:

³² Mus. inv. 124514: Rendini in Giuliano (1979) 260–4 no. 161 with further bibliography. The hair is divided from ear to ear, sometimes over the apex of the head or sometimes further forward. In artistic representations of such servile hairstyles, the parting of the hair may or may not be clearly delineated. See also Pollini (1999) 31, fig. 15. Cf., however, Boschung (1987) 15, 25, 30, 109 no. 848, who has recently taken this altar as Tiberian, but without offering any demonstrable evidence for such a dating.

³³ See especially my discussion of the *Lex Scantinia* with further bibliography on the subject: Pollini (1999) 22–8.

³⁴ Richlin (1992a) 223–6.

Transeo puerorum infelicum greges, quos post transacta conuiuia aliae cubiculi contumeliae exspectant. Transeo agmina exoletorum per nationes coloresque discripta, ut eadem omnibus leuitas sit, eadem primae mensura lanuginis, eadem species capillorum, ne quis, cui rector est coma, crispulis misceatur.

(Seneca, *Epistulae* 95.24)

I pass over the flocks of luckless boys, whom other physical abuses of the bed chamber await after the banquet is over. I pass over the troops of catamites, (described according to nation and colour), who should all have the same smooth skin, the same degree of first down upon their cheeks and the same hair style, so that no boy with rather straight hair get mixed in with the[se] dear/poor little curly haired slave-boys.

Here Seneca notes the hairstyle as one of the distinguishing characteristics of these curly haired slave-boys (*crispuli*).³⁵ There is no real indication of the length of the hair, only its curly nature (Seneca's contrast is really between free-born lads³⁶ and curly haired slave-boys). Since the hair of some free-born boys must also have been curly, or somewhat curly, then perhaps the hair of these boy catamites (*exoleti crispuli*) was long or longish, while the hair of naturally curly haired free-born boys would usually have been cut relatively short. But even here, there may not have been any real consistency.³⁷ Other terms such as *calamistratus* ('with artificially curled hair'), *cirratus* ('curly haired'), as well as *cappillatus*, *comatus*, and *crinitus* ('long-haired'),³⁸ were used to characterise slave-boys, and some of these terms imply long or longish hair. A clear distinction between slave-boys and young free-born boys based only on hair length and/or curliness of hair cannot, however, be maintained consistently because some free-born

³⁵ I take the diminutive form of *crispus* (i.e., *crispulus*) in this context to mean 'dear/poor little curly heads', as Seneca clearly sympathises with these *puerorum infelicum greges* ('troupes of luckless boy'). For *crispulus* see Sen. *Ep.* 95.24.

³⁶ Here we should assume free-born boys (*ingenui*), although freed children cannot be excluded.

³⁷ On the so-called Warren Cup, for example, a slave-boy who peers through a half-open door wears his curly hair short: Pollini (1999) 22, 38–9, figs 1, 7. For a pubertal boy wearing the longish servile hairstyle, see below.

³⁸ See Fless (1995) 58 with specific references. See, e.g., Mart. *Epigr.* 2.57.5, 3.58.31, 12.49.1, 12.70.9, 12.97.4; Petron. *Sat.* 27.1, 29.3, 58.1, 70.8; Sen. *Ep.* 119.14; Suet. *Calig.* 35; Apul. *Met.* 2.19; Isid. *Orig.* 10.57. See also *TLL* 3.313 *s.v.* *capillatus*; 3.1188 *s.v.* *cirratus*; 3.1755–6 *s.v.* *comatus*; 4.1205–6 *s.v.* *crinitus*.

boys are called *capillati* (Mart. *Epigr.* 10.62.1) and *cirradi* (Pers. *Sat.* 1.29–30).³⁹ The hair of these boys may have been on the longish side, but not necessarily arranged like a female hairdo. In general, free-born boys described as *capillati* and *cirradi* were probably sufficiently young that they would not have been sought after by most pederasts, or at least not by the ‘connoisseurs’ among them, who seem to have preferred boys between the ages of twelve and seventeen.⁴⁰

Writing his *Satyricon* in the 60s CE,⁴¹ Petronius provides some interesting information about the curly and long-haired slave-boys. As the guests arrive at the house of Trimalchio to attend his famous dinner, the protagonist Encolpius describes wall paintings near the entrance that record a narrative of Trimalchio’s life (*Sat.* 29). At the beginning of the series of paintings, Trimalchio is represented as a small child⁴² in a slave market. He is described as follows: *Ipse Trimalchio capillatus caduceum tenebat Mineruaque ducente Romam intrabat* (‘Trimalchio himself with long/longish hair was holding a caduceus and entered Rome with Minerva leading [the way]’). Later at the dinner, Trimalchio complements this visual record of his early career with details of his younger life as his master’s favourite (*Sat.* 76). Annoyed during the dinner with the antics of Encolpius’ boy catamite Giton, one of Trimalchio’s fellow freedmen (*conliberti*) calls Giton a *caepa cirrata*, or ‘curly haired (headed) onion’ (*Sat.* 58.1). This freedman, moreover, recalls his own servitude of forty years, mentioning that when he was a *puer*, he had longish hair (*puer capillatus*).⁴³ As for such generalised terms as *calamistratus*, *capillatus*, *cirratus*, *comatus*, *crinitus* and *crispulus*, we have no real sense of just how long their hair was or even the particular form such hair styles took, other than the fact that they were longish or curly. The only literary source known to me mentioning the precise length of locks of a slave-boy is again Petronius’ *Satyricon*. At his dinner party, Trimalchio’s fellow

³⁹ The reference to *cirradi* here is specifically to school boys. Freeborn boys (*ingenui*) are mentioned in Mart. *Epigr.* 9.29.7: *cirrata caterua*. See also *TLL* 3.1188 s.v. *cirratus*.

⁴⁰ For this age range, see below.

⁴¹ *CHCL* 2.4 (1982) esp. 139, 206.

⁴² As assumed by what Trimalchio says later on at the dinner: see below.

⁴³ Even knowing that Petronius wrote his *Satyricon* in the 60s CE, we cannot determine very accurately how old Petronius intended Trimalchio’s fellow freedman to have been during this presumably contemporary dinner party. By this time the freedman would have been at least 40 years old. However, since this story is fictional, we cannot also be sure that Petronius is not being anachronistic when he describes older freedmen as being *capillati* in their youth.

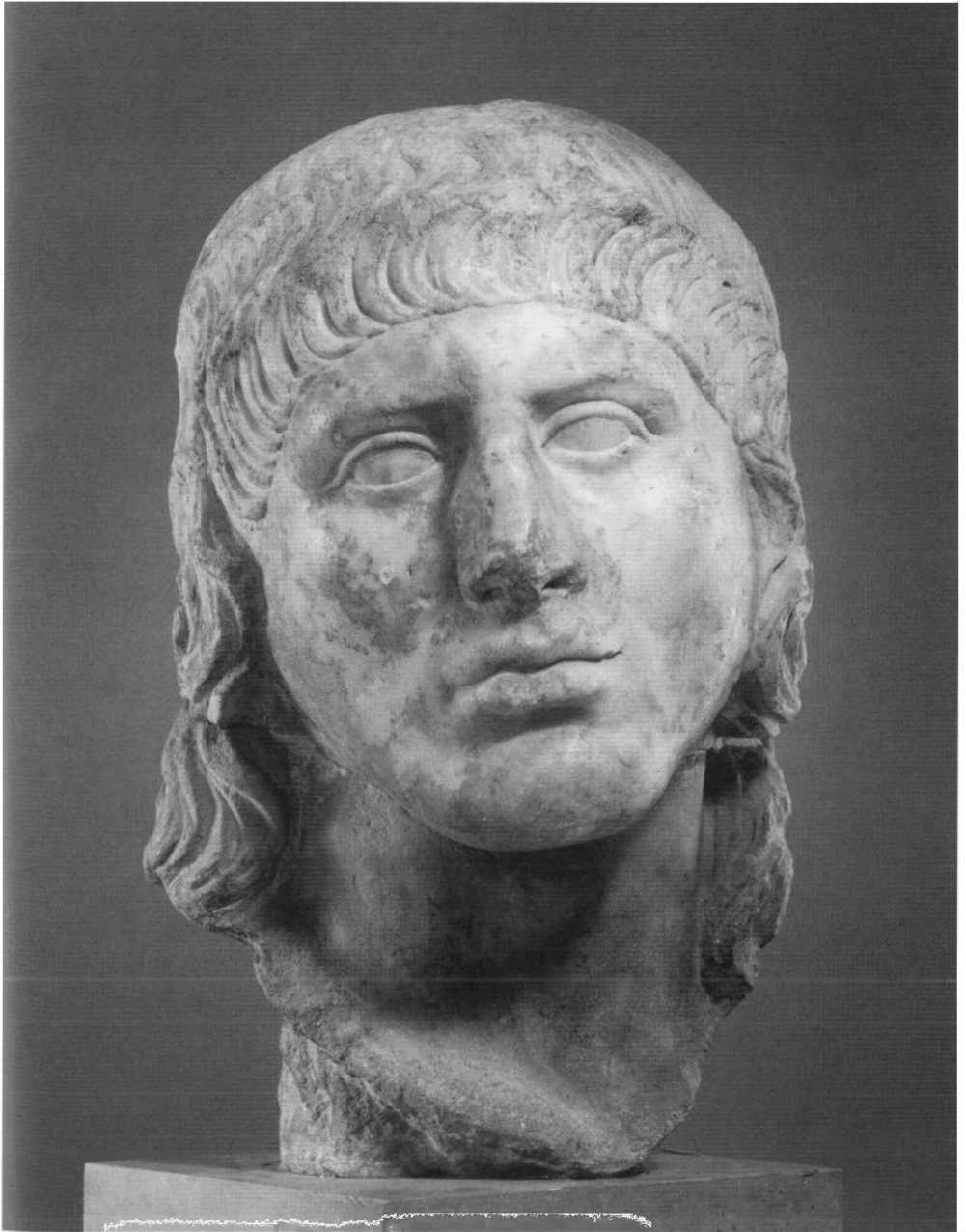


Fig. 7. Portrait of a Male, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Courtesy of the Museum.



Fig. 8. Portrait of a Male, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Courtesy of the Museum.



Fig. 9. Portrait of a Male, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Courtesy of the Museum.

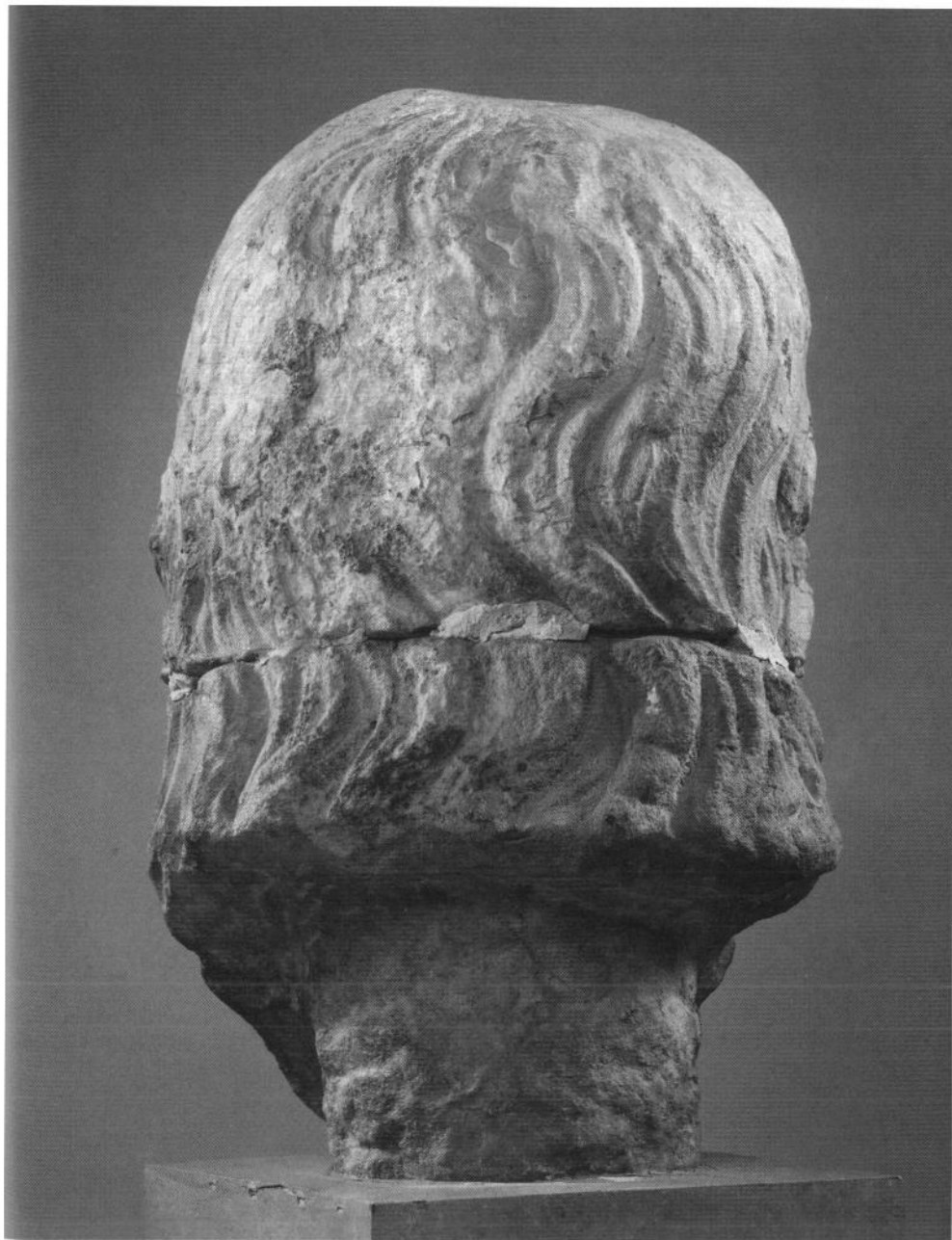


Fig. 10. Portrait of a Male, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Courtesy of the Museum.



Fig. 11. Portrait of a Slave-boy in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Courtesy of Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome (neg. 77.352).



Fig. 12. Portrait of a Slave-boy in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Courtesy of Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome (neg. 77.352).



Fig. 13. Relief in the Museo Gregoriano Profano, Vatican.
Photo, author.



Fig. 14. Relief in the Museo Gregoriano Profano, Vatican.
Photo, author.



Fig. 15. Relief on funerary altar in the Palazzo Istituto Romano dei Beni Stabili, Rome. Fless (1995) pl. 25.1.



→
Fig. 16. Relief on funerary altar in the Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome. Courtesy of Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome (neg. 37.715).



Fig. 17. Portrait Bust A in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu. Courtesy of the Museum.



Fig. 18. Portrait Bust A in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu. Courtesy of the Museum.



Fig. 19. Portrait Bust A in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu. Courtesy of the Museum.



Fig. 20. Portrait Bust B in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu. Courtesy of the Museum.



Fig. 21. Portrait Bust B in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu. Courtesy of the Museum.



Fig. 22. Portrait Bust B in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu. Courtesy of the Museum.



Fig. 23. Scene on the 'Warren Cup' in the British Museum. Courtesy of the Museum.



Fig. 24. Mosaic, Archaeological Museum, Capua. Napoli (1960) 74 pl. 61.

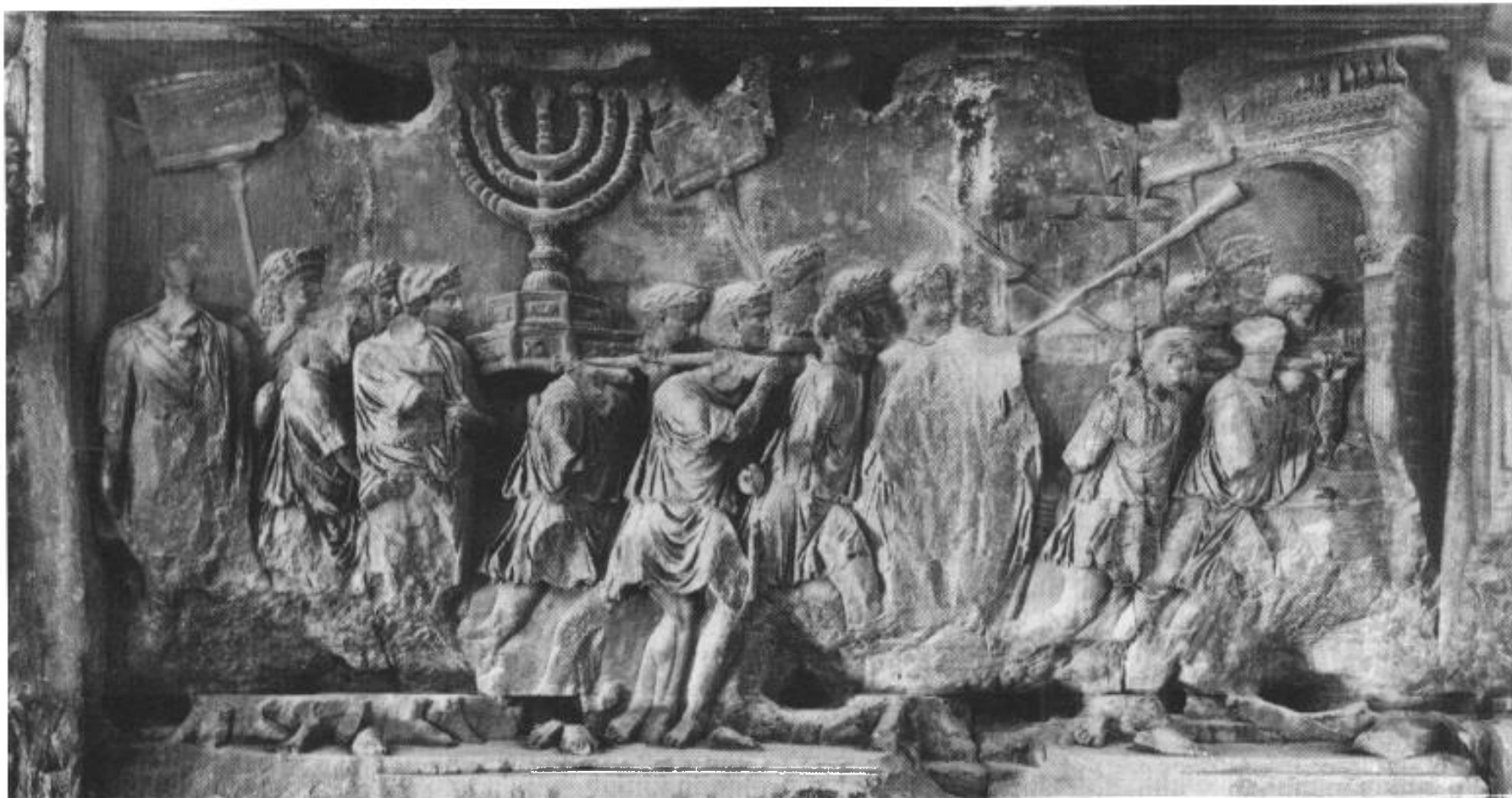


Fig. 25. 'Spolia' Panel, Arch of Titus, Rome. Alinari 5840.



Fig. 26. Detail of a ministrant from the 'Spolia' Panel, Arch of Titus, Rome. Courtesy of Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome (neg. 79.2563).

freedman specifically mentions (*Sat.* 58) that Giton's locks were two-thirds of a Roman foot (*besalis*), or about eight inches long: *Curabo, longe tibi sit comula ista besalis et dominus dupundarius*.

Perhaps the most famous hair locks of any slave-boy were those celebrated by the poet Statius in his poem *Capilli Flavi Earini* (*Silv.* 3.4). These locks belonged to Earinus, the beautiful Ganymede-like cup-bearer of Domitian.⁴⁴ In his poem, Statius claims that Venus herself had sent Earinus to Domitian as a gift from far off Pergamum because of the boy's amazing, star-like beauty (*puerum egregiae praeclarum sidere formae*, 26). Later Statius prays that a single lock of his hair, laid in a gem-studded golden chest, journey by sea to the shores of Earinus' birth (*patrias nunc solus crinis ad oras/naviget*, 81–2), where it would be dedicated in the Shrine of Asclepius at Pergamum.⁴⁵

Sex and Religious Ministry

The use of pretty long-haired slave-boys not only for sex but also for religious ministry was in accord with the Roman custom to have present at sacrifices that which was beautiful and pleasing to the gods. The sexual appeal of such boys is borne out by an anecdote about Tiberius, who reportedly was so taken with the beauty of his priestly boy-assistant that as soon as Tiberius had finished performing the sacrificial rites, he hauled off the boy and his brother, who was a flute player (*tibicen*) at the ceremony, and screwed both of them: *Fertur etiam in sacrificando quondam captus facie ministri acerram praefertentis nequisse abstinere, quin paene uixdum re diuina peracta ibidem statim seductum constupraret simulque fratrem eius tibicinem...* (Suet. *Tib.* 44).⁴⁶ Such a close relationship between handsome boys for sex and for religious ministry should not come as a surprise, in any case, judging from the number of recent lawsuits brought against priests and ministers who have had sexual relations with boys, some of whom had even served as 'altar boys'—a testimony itself to the endurance of the 'classical tradition'.

⁴⁴ For (T.) Flavius Earinus, see *RE* 6.2 col. 2597 no. 81.

⁴⁵ For the gem-studded golden chest and destination, see also Stat. *Silv.* 3 *praef.*; 3.4.1–2, 90–1. After being his slave, Earinus was freed by Domitian (*Earinus... Germanici nostri [Domitiani] libertus*, *Silv.* 3 *praef.*).

⁴⁶ Cf. also Philo, *De Vita Contemplativa* 48–51, who speaks of the comeliness of these slave-boys.

Providing further insight into the connection between sex and religion are two life size, bronze Gallo-Roman portrait busts of two youths (portrait A: figs 17–19; portrait B: figs 20–22) in the J. Paul Getty Museum.⁴⁷ These portrait busts, most likely dating to the late Neronian-early Flavian period, were found with other bronze artefacts of a religious nature from a shrine of a local Celto-Roman war-god named Cobannus, who may have been worshiped in connection with the imperial cult and a proto-military youth organisation known as the *Iuuentus*.⁴⁸ By comparison with other works of Gallo-Roman art, the Getty bronzes are of rather high quality. With their hollow eye sockets once filled with coloured glass-paste eyes, these busts would have been striking portraits, despite the typical Gallo-Roman stylistic trends in generalising facial features and treating organic forms in a linear manner. An especially artificial, linear treatment is most evident in the hair at the back of the head, which would generally not have been seen, as such images were often either set against a wall or in a niche. Sectional cuts made in the original clay model appear along the present hairline at the nape of the neck (figs 19, 22). Traces of solder in this area indicate that long, separately cast, flat bronze sections representing hair locks, now missing, would have once been attached to the base of the hairlines. Because there are no traces on the bust of hair locks touching the shoulders, these locks would have been about the same length as those supposedly worn by Giton in the *Satyricon*, as noted above. The division of the hair into bands or skeins at the back of the head finds a parallel in other feminised hairstyles, like that of a *delicatus* in a portrait in the Uffizi Gallery (figs 11–12).⁴⁹ Another common, although not always consistent feature of these servile hairstyles is the distinctive

⁴⁷ Portrait A (Mus. inv. 89.AB.67.1), portrait B (Mus. inv. 89.AB.67.2). See also Mattusch (1996) 326–7. For the identification of these *delicati* and their dating, see Pollini (2001) and (forthcoming). Fless (1995) was apparently unaware of these portraits.

⁴⁸ The best and most recent critical treatment of the entire problem of these youth organisations is that of Ginestet (1991). For a useful brief summary of the nature of the evidence and past scholarship on the *Iuuentus*: Jaczynowska (1978) 5–16 and Ginestet (1991) 9–27. For the possible connection between this organisation, the imperial cult and a cache of eight bronzes from a shrine of Cobannus, see Pollini (forthcoming).

⁴⁹ See also the portrait of a slave-boy formerly in the Heyl collection in Darmstadt (see above, n. 20, for photographic references).

way in which the hair is brushed forward and backward from a central part running from ear to ear over the top of the head.

The costliness of relatively high quality portraits like these may be taken as indicative of how dearly loved such pet slave-boys were by their masters, who were undoubtedly the individuals who commissioned these images. The associative context of the Getty portraits, the apparent age of the individual represented and their iconographic hairstyles suggest that these particular boys served as priestly assistants in the cult of Cobannus. If so, the two busts may have been set up by some adoring master who served as a priest in this cult and used his own slave-boys as his sacrificial ministrants, as was customary.

The Deliciae of the Pederasts

From Latin and Greek literature, we know that long-haired *delicati* served as their master's passive male sexual partners, who were 'pedicated', or penetrated anally.⁵⁰ The literary evidence is graphically supported by relief scenes of slave-boys being pedicated by two older males on an early imperial silver *scyphus* known as the 'Warren Cup'.⁵¹ The younger of the penetrated boys on the cup (fig. 23), who appears to be about twelve or thirteen years old, is of particular interest because of his age and hairstyle. He has a coiffure typically worn by *delicati*: sickle shaped bangs over the forehead, with long, loose hair locks at the back of the head cascading onto the back. As suggested by the hair patterns, the artist appears to have attempted to show a hair part running from ear to ear over the top of the head.

We know from literature that 'connoisseur' pederasts preferred slave-boys between the ages of roughly twelve and seventeen, when their bodies were still smooth and without the coarse facial and body hairs associated with manhood. To prolong this hairless condition, masters often had their *delicati* depilated. A poet and connoisseur pederast by the name of Strato, who was a contemporary of Hadrian, provides evidence for the sort of homosexual love represented on

⁵⁰ I have coined the term 'pedicate' from the Latin *paedicare* or *pedicare*. See also Pollini (1999) 21.

⁵¹ For the Warren Cup: Clarke (1993) 275–94; Clarke (1998); Pollini (1999).

the Warren Cup. Strato's pederastic interests and preferences are rather typical and part of a long-standing Greek tradition that continued on under Rome.⁵² Discussing the age range of boys 'ripe' for pedicating, Strato states in the so-called *Anthologia Palatina*:

Ἀκμῇ δωδεκέτους ἐπιτέρπομαι· ἔστι δὲ τούτου
 χῶ τρισκαιδεκέτης πολὺ ποθεινότερος·
 χῶ τὰ δις ἐπτὰ νέμων, γλυκερώτερον ἄνθος Ἐρώτων·
 τερπνότερος δ' ὁ τρίτης πεντάδος ἀρχόμενος·
 ἐξεπικαιδέκατον δὲ θεῶν ἔτος· ἐβδόματον δὲ
 καὶ δέκατον ζητεῖν οὐκ ἐμόν, ἀλλὰ Διός.
 εἰ δ' ἐπὶ πρεσβυτέρους τις ἔχει πόθον, οὐκέτι παίζει,
 ἀλλ' ἤδη ζητεῖ τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος'.

(*Anthologia Palatina* 12.4.1–8)

I delight in the prime of a twelve year old boy,
 but much more desirable is one of thirteen.
 One of fourteen is a sweeter flower of love, but
 one beginning his fifteenth year is more of a pleasure.
 The sixteenth year is that of the gods. Yet the
 seventeenth is not mine but for Zeus to seek.
 If, however, one has a passion for those still older,
 he no longer plays but forthwith 'receives his reply'.

The polarity of this twelve to seventeen year age range appears to be intentionally underscored in the representation of the older and younger pedicated boys on the Warren Cup.⁵³

Epigraphical evidence indicates that the twelve to seventeen age range is precisely that of slave-boys reared in the imperial *paedagogia*, or 'slave schools', which date back at least to the time of Tiberius.⁵⁴ Homes of wealthy private citizens also had such slave schools. There slave-boys, who were sometimes called *paedagogiani*, were taught various skills needed in the operation of the master's home. A mosaic from Capua (fig. 24),⁵⁵ dating to the Flavian period, shows a group

⁵² Erotic epigrammatic writing was known long before the period in which the Warren Cup was created. The erotic world of Strato was, in fact, very similar to that of third-century BCE Alexandria. For similar erotic motifs, see Tarán (1992) 434–51. For a work that is roughly contemporary with the Warren Cup, see, e.g., Gow and Page (1968) and Parker (1988).

⁵³ For the reasons, see Pollini (1999) 32, 34, 36–7, 39.

⁵⁴ For the epigraphical evidence: Pollini (1999) 32 n. 115, 134 with n. 130.

⁵⁵ Fless (1955) 60, fig. 25.2. See also Bianchi Bandinelli (1950) 178–9, who incorrectly interprets this representation as a group of girls. For an excellent colour photo of this mosaic: Napoli (1960) 74 pl. 61.

of *paedagogiani* with their freedman teacher (or *paedagogus*), who appears as the tall, older figure in the centre of the back row. Although the *paedagogia* of the wealthy could be quite large, those of the imperial house were undoubtedly the largest. The special care and pampering that some of the imperial *paedagogiani* received and such flattering designations as *pueri eminentes Caesaris* ('distinguished boys of the *princeps*') suggest that there was some sort of hierarchy established within the *paedagogia*. Undoubtedly occupying the apex of this 'servile pyramid' were the *delicati*, the pampered pets of the master.

Ex-slaves, like the wealthy freedman Trimalchio in Petronius' *Satyricon*, might themselves become masters of slaves. Trimalchio was a versatile fellow, intimating that during his youth he satisfied sexually not only the master but also the mistress of the house. As master of his own home, Trimalchio had his own favourite slave-boys. This Trimalchian 'success story' demonstrates that even those who were 'screwed' could, *mutatis mutandis*, end up screwing others and in the process make millions—what we would call today 'social mobility'.

Conclusions about the Metropolitan Portrait

We now return to the question of the role in Roman society of the individual represented in the Metropolitan head and the reasons for his portrayal. This mature and unhandsome male with rugged physiognomic features, combined incongruously with a long feminised coiffure with bangs over the forehead, does not fit the image of an adolescent pretty-boy *delicatus* type, as known from both the written and visual records.⁵⁶ This is not, however, an isolated case of an older youth with a female-like hairdo: Young men sporting feminised hairstyles and wearing tunics commonly appear on various State reliefs representing imperial triumphs. These servile youths from the imperial *paedagogia* are shown carrying a variety of objects associated with the triumph. Some hold great cultic *thymiateria*, or

⁵⁶ The only instance known to me of an ugly *delicatus* is preserved in Petronius (*Sat.* 28). Here Petronius mentions that Trimalchio's pet slave-boy (*deliciae eius*) was a 'wizened, bleary-eyed boy more ugly than his master Trimalchio' (*puer uetulus, lip-pus, domino Trimalchione deformior*). This comment is to be taken as tongue-in-cheek, for Petronius is once again perversely poking fun at Trimalchio for his total lack of taste.

candelabrum-like incense burners; others carry ceremonial shields and spears,⁵⁷ and still others bear *tabulae ansatae* (small portable billboards), on which was recorded information about the vanquished and the spoils of war.⁵⁸

Some of our best comparanda for the hairstyle and dating of the Metropolitan portrait are found in the famous 'Spolia' Relief (fig. 25) on the Arch of Titus, set up in the early Domitianic period to celebrate Titus' victory over the Jews in 70 CE. In fact, the closest parallel for the feminised, sickle-shaped hairdo with shoulder-length tresses of the Metropolitan head is the coiffure of one of the servile *tabula ansata*-bearers (fig. 26) in this relief.⁵⁹ One difference, however, is that unlike this relief figure's ear, which is only partly covered by his hair, those of the Metropolitan male are completely covered. In this respect, his hair is like that of another *tabula ansata*-bearer on the Arch.⁶⁰ Although this particular feminised, sickle-shaped hairstyle continued in use until about the middle of the second century CE,⁶¹ the sculptural style of the Metropolitan portrait, as already noted, suggests a later Flavian or possibly earlier Trajanic date.

All of the representations of youthful ministrants found in State reliefs are, strictly speaking, generic idealised types, not portraits of specific individuals. In this respect, they differ from portraits in the round of adolescent pretty-boy *delicati*, such as the Uffizi portrait, that appear to show individualising features. Again, good or high quality portraits of slave-boys are an indication that these youths must have been fairly special to their masters to have warranted the creation of their portraits in marble or bronze. The beauty and pubescence of these slave-boys suggest that they were 'ripe for pedicating' and, therefore, most likely served as their masters' pet slave-boys.

⁵⁷ For those carrying incense burners, shields and spears, see, e.g., Hassel (1966) pl. 22, fig. 1. For the differences between the *thymiateria* and *candelabra*, in general: Fless (1995) 26.

⁵⁸ Pfanner (1983) pl. 54. For representations of the *tabulae ansatae*: 51, 53 *et passim*, fig. 36.

⁵⁹ Fless (1995) 65, pl. 21.2.

⁶⁰ Fless (1995) 67, pl. 21.1, does not note how the ear of this figure is completely covered by his hair. Instead, she claims that the only other example of the hair covering the ear of a *delicatus* is on the Ara Pacis (cat. 8, pl. 18.1); however, the ear and back section of this head are missing. More likely at this time, this ministrant on the Ara Pacis has longish side hair in front of the ear. See further Pollini (forthcoming).

⁶¹ See, for example, the hairstyle of a slave-boy sacrificial assistant on the Column of Trajan: Fless (1995) 66, pl. 22.1 (incorrectly given as pl. 22.2).

'Graduation' from the *paedagogium* might not have ended the 'career' of a slave-boy, whether he remained a slave or not. With the skills he had learned, he might continue to provide sexual pleasures as an adult, as implied by Strato's comment cited above: εἰ δ' ἐπὶ πρεσβυτέρους τις ἔχει πόθον, οὐκέτι παίζει, / ἄλλ' ἤδη ζητεῖ τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος (If, however, one has a passion for those still older [i.e., more than seventeen], he no longer 'plays' but forthwith 'receives his reply', *Anth. Pal.* 12.4.7–8). Such older youths would have held special appeal for *pathici* ('pathics'), those who enjoyed being anally penetrated by well-endowed masculine 'studs'. Because a pathic was not the *domitor*, or dominant partner in a homosexual act of love-making, but rather on the 'receiving end', he was generally considered by the Romans to be effeminate and an object of derision. Two Latin terms, *admissarius*⁶² and *draucus*,⁶³ seem to have been used to describe well-endowed 'studs' or 'stallions'. For example, in one of his epigrams (9.27.10–12), Martial refers to such a pedicating *draucus*, recently freed from his *paedagogus*, whose 'uninfibulated' ('unpinned') penis⁶⁴ was distended

⁶² *TLL* 1.747 s.v. *admissarius*. For the use of the term *admissarius* ('stallion' in the sense of a 'stud') to describe a male with a large penis who anally penetrated other males, see Seneca, *Q Nat.* 1.16.2. Compare also the case of Hostius Quadra, who is said to have used special mirrors not only to view his sexual activities but also to magnify the size of the penises of his *admissarii* ('stallions', i.e., 'studs'): Seneca, *Q Nat.* 1.16.2. For the term *admissarius*: Adams (1983) 206–7.

⁶³ *TLL* 5.1.2067 s.v. *draucus*. *Draucus* seems to derive from the Greek δρᾶω ('I do or accomplish some great thing good or bad') and in homosexual relationships probably signifies one who is particularly good in 'servicing' (pedicating) his partner anally; therefore, a well-endowed pedicator. In *Epigr.* 11.72.1–2 (*Drauci Natta sui uocat pipinam / conlatus cui Gallus est Priapus*), Martial's use of the word *pipinna* (referring to the small penis of a boy and being the childish word for any penis in colloquial Latin) to describe the penis of Natta's *draucus* is a term of endearment for its opposite, that is, a large penis. This implied meaning is also made clear by Martial's comparing Natta to a *gallus* (a eunuch priest of Cybele) and his *draucus* to the god Priapus, who is always represented with a huge, erect penis. Cf. also Mart. *Epigr.* 1.96.12–13, 7.67.5–6.

⁶⁴ As a safeguard against their *paedagogiani* having sex with others, masters had their slave-boys 'infibulated', usually with silver *fibulae* (Plin. *HN* 33.152). This type of *fibula* seems to have been in the form of a *circulus*, or ring that kept the pierced foreskin of the penis closed over the *glans*, thus preventing *coitus*. For this form of *fibula* in literature, see *Scholia ad Juv. Sat.* 6.73.379 (*fibulam dicit circellos*); for visual evidence, see *RE* 9.2 col. 2544 s.v. *infibulatio*. *Infibulatio* is attested not only for slave-boys but also for athletes, singers and other professional performing artists: Mart. *Epigr.* 7.82, 11.75, 14.215; Juv. *Sat.* 6.73, 379–80. For the medical procedure: Celsus, *Med.* 7.25.2. For infibulation in general: *TLL* 6.1 s.v. *fibula* (d. in *pene*) 644; Daremberg and Saglio (1877–1919) 5.2.2.1111 s.v. *fibula*; *RE* 9.22 col. 2543–8 s.v. *infibulatio*; Dingwall (1925).

and ready for 'service' (*draucus/iam paedagogo liberatus et cuius refibulat turgidum faber penem . . .*).

The quality of carving of the Metropolitan portrait is sufficiently high to indicate that the portrait was commissioned by a person of some means. But what sort of person would have wanted to commission a portrait of an overly mature youth already in his 20s with such rough, unhandsome-looking features? I would suggest that this rather remarkable portrait of a rugged male may be a rare image of some unknown *admissarius* or *draucus*, active in the later Flavian-early Trajanic period. And, if not commissioned by some 'pathic' master, then perhaps by some lusty mistress!⁶⁵

⁶⁵ All Latin and Greek translations are my own. A version of this essay was presented at an international symposium at Cuma (July 1997), at the American Academy in Rome (July 1997), and at a special 'Gold Medal' panel at the 1998 annual meetings of the Archaeological Institute of America in Washington D.C. I thank all those with whom I have discussed my work.

6. *PLURIMA ET AMPLISSIMA OPERA*: PARSING FLAVIAN ROME

James E. Packer

The Rome that greeted Vespasian and his supporters on their arrival in late summer or early fall of 70 CE,¹ exhibited both large-scale burned over areas and the architectural excesses of Nero's last years.² The great fire of 64 CE had largely destroyed ten of the fourteen regions into which Augustus had divided the city (Tac. *Ann.* 15.40) and, although many neighbourhoods had been or were being rebuilt, many important buildings had perished and had not yet been reconstructed. Among these were the two wooden amphitheatres in the fashionable Campus Martius, the older smaller one of Statilius Taurus and the splendidly decorated, more modern structure of Nero near the Saepta Iulia.³ Thus only the Circus Maximus served as a major venue for gladiatorial games in the capital.⁴

A second smaller fire, which had broken out on the slopes of the Capitoline Hill during the recent clashes between the supporters of the Flavians and the forces of Vitellius, had even destroyed the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus (Tac. *Hist.* 3.71).⁵ As the empire's most prestigious shrine, this was the place a successful general traditionally offered the sacrifices that ended his triumphal procession.⁶ Its blackened ruins thus not only disgraced the symbolic heart of the Roman world but also visually symbolised the temporary collapse of the imperial system. And, of the architectural projects under way at the end of Nero's reign, only the Macellum (the

¹ Bengtson (1979) 63.

² The title of this chapter (*plurima et amplissima opera*, '[He restored] many splendid public buildings') is a phrase from Suet. *Dom.* 5.1. Darwall-Smith (1996) lists and discusses all the Flavians' identifiable buildings in Rome. This essay concentrates instead on their most significant architectural projects.

³ Golvin (1988) 1.52–3, 55–6; *LTUR* 1.36–7.

⁴ With its increasingly monumental character, the Roman Forum was no longer a suitable location for the temporary wooden amphitheatres that had housed earlier gladiatorial *munera*: Beacham (1999) 106 fig. 16.

⁵ *LTUR* 3.150–1 (additional ancient references).

⁶ Versnel (1970) 61, 171, 184, 262, 312–13, 394–5.

city market just east of the Forum) and Circus Maximus were complete.⁷ Nero's Golden House, now the major imperial residence, was still unfinished.⁸ Yet, since the latter—a vast suburban villa built atypically in town—had expropriated what had been, before the fire of 64 CE, whole formerly densely populated neighbourhoods in the valley between and on the slopes of the Palatine, the Caelian and the Esquiline hills,⁹ its construction had much tarnished the reputation of the imperial government.

Since the new Flavian regime had not only to administer the capital successfully, it had to be seen to doing so by Rome's inhabitants, Vespasian and his advisers acted quickly. To emphasise the restoration of religious and civil order, work began almost at once on the reconstruction of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. By June of 70 CE, even before Vespasian returned Rome, an elaborate ceremony had reconsecrated the site, and shortly after his arrival in September¹⁰ Vespasian personally began its preparing for construction. Setting a basket of rubble on his own head (Suet. *Vesp.* 8.5), he formally urged leading citizens to help him clear away the debris. During the next six years, imperial funds insured the completion of the project.¹¹

Meanwhile, the emperor took up residence in the Gardens of Sallust (Cass. Dio 65.10.4) between the Quirinal and Pincian Hills¹² and began to dismember the Golden House. For the time being, he left in place on the Velia (the spur between the Quirinal and Palatine Hills), the 120-foot-high gilded bronze colossus with the face of Nero (Suet. *Nero* 31.1), that novel adornment of the colonnaded vestibule through which visitors had entered the Golden House from the Roman Forum and the Via Sacra.¹³ But he threw open the palace vestibule (Cass. Dio 65.15.1) and returned to public use the valley

⁷ Circus Maximus: *LTUR* 1.274; Macellum: *LTUR* 3.202; Tortorici (1991) 44–7.

⁸ *LTUR* 2.49, 61.

⁹ Panella (1990) 56–62; Panella (1996) 27–164.

¹⁰ Bengtson (1979) 63.

¹¹ Wace (1907) 229–49, pls 20, 24–5 (Trajanic relief showing temple facade); Colini (1925) 181–91 (pediment); Townend (1987) (restoration ritual); *LTUR* 3.151.

¹² *LTUR* 3.79–80.

¹³ Lega (1989–90) 347–8 estimates the height at 35 m. (about 119 Roman feet). Additional ancient references in Bergmann (1993) 7–8 suggest a statue only 100 feet high (with or without its base); see Bergmann (1993) fig. 10 for her reconstruction sketch.

between the Palatine, Esquiline and Caelian Hills, the site of Nero's artificial pleasure lake¹⁴ and the surrounding gardens. The lake was drained; the resulting hollow was used for a new building, a gigantic permanent amphitheatre of stone and concrete that would replace the earlier ones of wood.

Under construction for the rest of Vespasian's reign,¹⁵ this structure has a travertine facade that superimposes three arcades framed by half columns, successively Tuscan, Ionic and Corinthian, the second and third orders on pedestals (fig. 27).¹⁶ Also on pedestals, Corinthian pilasters on high sub-plinths divide the attic into bays that alternated windows with the great bronze shields visible on late first century CE coin portraits of the building.¹⁷ Above the shields and windows, travertine brackets supported masts that carried the *uelarium*,¹⁸ an awning that protected the heads of spectators from the cruel summer sun. In the interior, five tiers of seats (a lower section and four *maeniana*) framed the spacious arena (87.30 × 54.30 m.).¹⁹ Sloping inward toward the arena, these were supported on raking barrel vaults attached in turn to horizontal barrel vaults over the four corridors that encircled the building on the ground floor (fig. 28). The second and third levels had two such corridors; the fourth, one. Stairs from these corridors led up to the seats.

Protected by a parapet five metres high, the lowest tier included a terrace two metres wide (for the seats of senators) and four additional rows. Two boxes for the most honoured spectators divided the terrace into four sections. The emperor and his entourage occupied the box toward the Palatine Hill; the Vestal Virgins and the magistrate delegated by the emperor to preside over the games in his absence, that toward the Caelian. Knights used the seventeen rows of seats in the next tier (the *maenianum primum*); ordinary citizens, the twenty-two rows in the following two (the *maenianum secundum imum* and *summum*); women, the poor and slaves, eleven rows of wooden bleachers

¹⁴ Panella (1990) 62–3.

¹⁵ At Vespasian's death, only the foundations and the lower two arcades were in place. Golvin (1988) 1.175.

¹⁶ Wilson Jones (1993) 429–32 (design of the facade); measured plan and elevation of a typical bay: fig. 33A (herein fig. 28).

¹⁷ Trell and Price (1977) 60–2, fig. 110 (facing p. 66); Graefe (1979) 2 pls 101.3–105.4; Bergmann (1993) pl. 21.1; Luciani (1993) 83–9.

¹⁸ Graefe (1979) 1.55–60, 98–102.

¹⁹ Luciani (1990) 27.

in the colonnaded gallery in the fifth (the *maenianum summum in ligneis*).²⁰ Below the wooden, sand-covered floor or the arena were cells, cages and storerooms for the captives, condemned criminals, animals and scenery displayed in the arena above. Elevators raised by hand-operated pulleys conveyed these necessities to the surface of the arena.²¹

While the reconstruction of the Temple of the Capitoline Triad²² and the site, size and lavish appointments of the rising new amphitheatre gained the Flavians much popular support, contemporary political power in Rome—as Vespasian well knew—required both military success and its conspicuous visual commemoration. The temples vowed by the generals of the old republic were still important landmarks.²³ Pompey had celebrated his subjugation of the Near East with Rome's first stone theatre. Caesar and Augustus had glorified their martial achievements with whole new fora. Vespasian could do no less. Fortunately, Titus' recent victory over rebellious Judaea and the suppression of the other revolts on the borders of the empire supplied both the pretexts and finances for a suitably lavish new victory monument. On the lot previously occupied by the Macellum,²⁴ Vespasian raised the Temple of Peace (fig. 29), a complex reckoned among Rome's most beautiful monuments (Plin. *HN* 36.24.102).

The footprint of the Macellum determined its rectangular plan (fig. 30) and, as in the Forum of Augustus,²⁵ a high fire wall of massive, externally rusticated, peperino and travertine blocks, crowned by a simple travertine cornice, protected the interior.²⁶ Within²⁷ the colonnade on the south, east and west sides of the central plaza had white marble steps, a Corinthian order with red granite shafts, and a white marble interior pavement. In bays framed by pilasters that corresponded to the columns on the facade, tabernacles visually

²⁰ Colagrossi (1913) 63–87, pl. 2; Luciani (1993) 80–1; Wilson Jones (1993) 436 fig. 32 (herein fig. 28).

²¹ Luciani (1990) 27–9; Luciani (1993) 85–90.

²² Trell and Price (1977) 63 fig. 115; 64 fig. 116; 70 fig. 12.

²³ Orlin (1997) 45–75.

²⁴ *LTUR* 3.202; Tortorici (1991) 37.

²⁵ Castagnoli and Cozza (1956–8) pl. 4; Lanciani (1897) 205 fig. 81.

²⁶ Colini (1937) 14–15. On the north side, the enclosure wall was of brick-faced concrete—Riemann (1942) 18.2.2114; Castagnoli and Cozza (1956–8) 132—sections of which have reappeared in the 1999 excavations of the Comune di Roma.

²⁷ Colini (1937) 14, 16–18 n. 38, 21, 27 (pavement); Castagnoli and Cozza (1956–8) 130.

enlivened the back walls.²⁸ On the east and west sides of the Forum, two rectangular recesses, screened from the colonnade by two fluted white marble columns *in antis*,²⁹ interrupted the fire wall. The plaza was variously treated. Its centre was paved with rectangular white marble slabs.³⁰ The sides had raised rectangular flower beds enlivened by masterpieces of Greek sculpture.³¹

Large-scale columns *en ressaute* with polished africano shafts closed the north side of the plaza.³² On the south side, behind the colonnade, were five large rectangular chambers. The central one, the Templum Pacis,³³ is still unexcavated, but fragmentary fluted white marble shafts from its porch indicate that the porch, which also probably had a pediment, was considerably higher than the colonnades that flanked it.³⁴ A tetrastyle columnar screen separated the porch from the interior of the Templum where, in an apse opposite the entrance, a majestic, colossal female statue of Peace sat on a throne holding a palm branch.³⁵ On each side of this cella, a long, narrow corridor led to the Clivus ad Carinas and to the shops attached to the back of the Templum Pacis.³⁶ Part of the Horrea Pipterataria, these were later largely destroyed for the construction of the Basilica of Maxentius/Constantine.³⁷ Following a destructive fire at the end of the second century CE and reconstruction by Septimius Severus (193–211 CE), the two rectangular rooms west of the sanctuary housed, respectively, the Forma Urbis, a marble plan of Rome³⁸ and the famous Bibliotheca Pacis ('The Library of Peace').³⁹

²⁸ Pavement: Colini (1937) 20, 21, 28; Colini (1937) 26 (pilasters); Castagnoli and Cozza (1956–8) 124–7, 129. These tabernacles would have had triangular pediments like the one above a door at the south-west corner of the colonnade: Castagnoli and Cozza (1956–8) 125, fig. 6, pl. 2.

²⁹ 'Notizario' (1934); Colini (1937) 26–7.

³⁰ Visible in the excavations of 1999.

³¹ Gardens: Lloyd (1982) 91–3; Anderson (1982) 105; Anderson (1984) 108. The excavations of 1999 have exposed some of these planters. Sculpture: Colini (1937) 11–12, 19–20; Riemann (1942) 18.2.2109; Anderson (1984) 106–7.

³² Colini (1937) 21–2, 34; Riemann (1942) 18.2.2114. Additional fragments of these shafts came to light in 1999.

³³ Carettoni *et al.* (1960) 1.73; 2 pl. 20.

³⁴ Colini (1937) 14, 34, 38 fig. 24, 39; Carettoni *et al.* (1960) 2 pl. 20.

³⁵ Colini (1937) 9 fig. 1; cf. Riemann (1942) 18.2.2109.

³⁶ These appear clearly on the Forma Urbis. Colini (1937) 38 fig. 24.

³⁷ Riemann (1942) 18.2.2113; Castagnoli and Cozza (1956–8) 132.

³⁸ Colini (1937) 38–9; Castagnoli and Cozza (1956–8) 123; Carettoni *et al.* (1960) 1.177–81, 189–95.

³⁹ Castagnoli and Cozza (1956–8) 137–41, pls 1, 3.

Although unexcavated, the corresponding east chambers behind the Forum colonnade were probably identical⁴⁰ and like them would have had flat (coffered?) ceilings and timber-truss roofs.⁴¹

Since Titus reigned only two years (79–81 CE), he undertook no large-scale architectural work. But the little building he did emphasised his position as both Vespasian's heir and chief executor of his projects. Thus he provisionally completed the amphitheatre in 80 CE.⁴² Lasting over two months, the lavish dedicatory games were complemented by the opening of a new set of hastily constructed baths on the slopes of the Oppian Hill (Mart. *Spect.* 1.2.7; Suet. *Tit.* 7.3; Cass. Dio 66.25.1).

That establishment has almost completely disappeared, but random excavations and a sixteenth century plan by Palladio (fig. 31) give some idea of its original layout and luxurious appointments.⁴³ A vaulted, brick-faced (probably stuccoed) pavilion near and on the same level as the amphitheatre gave access to a grand stair that led up the Oppian hill to the artificial rectangular terrace that supported the bath building. Each of its four facades had a formal entrance. Those to the east and west admitted patrons to vestibules (fig. 31.1) that led to identical covered apodyteria (locker rooms, fig. 31.2) with vaulted arcades (for clothes storage?) around open two-story centres (light wells?).⁴⁴ These preceded the principal bath rooms. The largest (fig. 31.3), the rectangular groin-vaulted frigidarium (the cold room), had four rectangular corner plunges behind columnar screens. On the building's main axis, between the north pools, a large apse faced south and, across from it, a rectangular recess opened through another columnar screen into the *tepidarium* (lukewarm room, fig. 31.4). Its basins were housed in four small semicircular corner niches. On each side, an ample door opened into to a stair (fig. 31.5) that led to an upper floor above the three secondary *calidaria* (hot rooms) next to the *tepidarium* (fig. 31.6). A long, rectangular hall with columnar screens on all four sides (fig. 31.9) conducted bathers to the twin groin-vaulted pavilions that housed the principal *calidaria* (fig. 31.8).

⁴⁰ Colini (1937) 34.

⁴¹ Castagnoli and Cozza (1956–8) 129, 130 fig. 141; Carettoni *et al.* (1960) 1.194.

⁴² Golvin (1988) 1.175.

⁴³ Lanciani (1895) 113. Later excavations: Nash (1962) 468–71; Caruso and Ceccherelli (1987–8) 317–23; Caruso *et al.* (1989–90) 71–6; Caruso (1991–2) 81–3.

⁴⁴ Yegül (1992) 142.

There were four basins in each: one in the north niche; one in the rectangular recess centred in each of the other walls. Except for the basin in the niche, all were lighted through adjacent columnar screens. Paved with black and white mosaic laid in coarse *tesserae*, the terrace (fig. 31.7) in front of the south facade of the building (facing the amphitheatre) must have been intended for walking or exercise.⁴⁵ The open niches on the north, east and west facades of the main bathing block, suggest that these areas may have been a garden.⁴⁶

Titus also began a temple to his deified father on an important site west of and adjacent to the Temple of Concord on the Clivus Capitolinus, the street that led to the summit of the Capitoline Hill. As completed with conventional materials by Domitian,⁴⁷ this structure had a simple plan. A front stair—the last six treads between the plinths of the columns on the facade—led from the street to a cella on a high podium. Like the rest of the superstructure and revetments, the porch was of white luna marble, parts of which were painted. The facade had six fluted Corinthian columns; the sides, two; and pilasters continued the order along the sides of the cella. The three finely finished columns still in position at the south-east corner of the porch, their entablature (and a reconstructed section of this entablature now displayed in the gallery of the Tabularium) attest the high quality and intricately ornate character of the architectural decoration. Originally revetted with coloured marbles, the interior is poorly preserved. The scanty remains indicate that small painted Corinthian columns on podia set close to the lateral walls framed bays. Facing the main door, a partially extant pedestal, once sheltered under a canopy supported by two lateral columns, supported the cult statue.⁴⁸

Unfortunately, Titus, 'the love and delight of the human race' (*amor ac deliciae generis humani*, Suet. *Tit.* 1), died in 81 CE, complaining bitterly that his life was being unjustly taken from him (*Tit.* 10.1). Domitian, Titus' younger brother and successor, immediately began after his accession a lavish program of public works, which changed

⁴⁵ Lanciani (1895) 113: 'mosaico grossolano bianco e nero'.

⁴⁶ Richardson (1992) 396–7; Yegül (1992) 139–42. The above description is largely based on Palladio's plan.

⁴⁷ De Angeli (1992) 137 dates the construction between late 79/early 80–86 CE.

⁴⁸ De Angeli (1992) 82–107, 117 cat. no. 22, 126–8; A. Normand in *Roma Antiqua* (1985) 21–2, 36–7 pls 13–14.

the face of Rome dramatically during the next fifteen years. The early projects owed much to Vespasian's aims and policies. Thus the new emperor gave the amphitheatre an upper colonnade of composite columns in stone and finished both Titus' baths and his Temple of Vespasian (fig. 32). The still well preserved Arch of Titus on the crest of the Velia and the vanished Temple of the Gens Flavia on the Quirinal Hill near the Baths of Diocletian expressed the new emperor's familial loyalty.⁴⁹

The most important of these early projects was, however, the complete reconstruction of Vespasian's Temple of Capitoline Jupiter, burned, after an existence of only four years, in the disastrous fire of 80 CE. Erected on the ancient foundations of the republican temple, Domitian's new building was—as the centre of Rome's most famous cult—in many ways reassuringly traditional. Contemporary coins and a partially preserved relief (fig. 33) show a temple on a podium with lateral extensions bracketing a front stair. The hexastyle facade had Corinthian columns, three deep at the front; one deep at the sides. The lateral colonnades ended against extended back wall of the three equally sized cellas consecrated to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva. There were, however, modern improvements. The gilded roof and door set off the superstructure of white pentelic marble; and the interior of the pediment and its cornice were elaborately decorated with reliefs and statues. Thus while the site and layout of the rebuilt temple necessarily conformed to the ancient requirements of the cult, its rich materials and fittings expressed the wealth and taste of the late first century CE.⁵⁰

In contrast to these earlier works, the later projects vividly illustrated Domitian's own peculiarities, interests and political objectives. Three were particularly significant: his two additions to the imperial fora and his palace on the Palatine Hill. Of the forum projects, only one, the Forum Transitorium, was ever built, and even it was later completed and dedicated by Nerva in his own name. It occupied part of the Argiletum, a street that connected the popular quarter known as the Suburra on the Esquiline Hill with the Forum Romanum.⁵¹ Best known in the early empire for its sellers of shoes and

⁴⁹ Darwall-Smith (1996) 159–66; Pfanner (1983) 13–90 (Arch of Titus).

⁵⁰ Colini (1926) 181–91; Trell and Price (1977) 65–70; *LTUR* 3.151, 437–8, figs 9–102; Stamper (1998–99) 136–8.

⁵¹ Tortorici (1991) 3.

fine books (Mart. *Epigr.* 1.117.10–11),⁵² the long, roughly rectangular final stretch of this street began just west of the exterior curve of the south Hemicycle of the Forum of Augustus and ended at the east facade of the Basilica Aemilia. This was a difficult site, but Domitian's architect, probably Rabirius (Mart. *Epigr.* 7.56),⁵³ was equal to its challenge. Two of the three neighbouring imperial fora, those of Caesar and Augustus, were long, rectangular plazas framed by colonnades, dominated at one of the short ends by a temple. Rabirius used the same plan but cleverly adapted it to the exigencies of the irregular area at his disposal (fig. 34).

His final layout solved three main design problems. The earlier Fora had spacious lateral colonnades (equal in the Forum of Caesar to about one-third the width of the plaza; in the Forum of Augustus, to one-quarter). Thus Rabirius had first to insure that the space between these lateral colonnades was wide enough both to set off the canonical temple and to relate geometrically to the perceived length of the plaza. Secondly, he had in the narrow corridor between the enclosure walls of the Temple of Peace and the Forum of Augustus to provide somehow—or to give the impression of having provided—the requisite colonnades. Thirdly, he had to disguise the irregular character of the east and west ends of the site.

He began by dividing the length of the space into four equal parts: the first determined the length of the temple; the next three, that of the open plaza. A single segment gave the width of the plaza plus two narrow margins on either side.⁵⁴ Excluding these margins, the proportions of the plaza were one to three.⁵⁵ While thus geometrically harmonious, the new layout still did not allow for colonnades. Rabirius solved this problem illusionistically. Drawing on the architectural repertoire of interior decoration,⁵⁶ he lined the margins on either side of the plaza with columns *en ressaut*. Fitting precisely into the narrow available space, these also gave the effect of colonnades (two, nicknamed the 'Colonnace' or 'big columns', still survive *in situ*).

⁵² Anderson (1982) 102; Anderson (1984) 120–1.

⁵³ Ward-Perkins (1981) 472 n. 17; Anderson (1982) 110; MacDonald (1982) 127–9. Site map: Bauer (1976–7) pl. D (herein fig. 34).

⁵⁴ 10 Roman feet (3 m.) wide: Drawing Archive, Comune di Roma, Portico d'Ottavia, Rome: section (X Ripartizione, Sovrintendenza AA.BB.AA, inv. no. 7.C.6.4, collocazione IIb/n. 7 and unnumbered elevation.

⁵⁵ Necessarily narrower than Vitruvius' prescribed 2:3: Vitr. 5.1.2.

⁵⁶ Blanckenhagen (1940) 154; Anderson (1984) 135.

Their fluted pavonazzetto shafts carried entablatures with figured friezes. The section above the 'Colonnacce' displays various scenes: the myth of Arachne, female artisans, portraits of various divinities (or women? the Muses? Nymphs?)⁵⁷ around Minerva. On the high attic above were large-scale reliefs of divinities (a Minerva survives) and on the upper cornice of the attic, colossal bronze statues.⁵⁸ The curved enclosure wall to the west (which probably also had columns *en ressaut*) mirrored the segmental curves of the two arches attached to each side of the temple at the junction between porch and cella. Completing Rabirius' design, this wall screened the interior of his forum from the awkward area behind the Basilica Aemilia.⁵⁹

Since the length of this shrine equalled one-quarter the length of the forum, Rabirius had to position site its cella (dedicated to Domitian's patron goddess Minerva) directly against the curved wall of the south hemicycle of Augustus' Forum. The adjacent arches (above) masked this irregularity, however, and the rest of the shrine was completely conventional. Extensions of the high podium bracketed a frontal stair leading to the hexastyle porch. The fluted pavonazzetto shafts of the Corinthian order carried the entablature (to which Nerva later added his dedicatory inscription) and a high triangular pediment.⁶⁰ Inside the cella, small, fluted pavonazzetto columns, probably on podia, enlivened the lateral walls, and the cult statue occupied a central rectangular recess at the back of the room.

The Forum Transitorium, however, must have been intended originally only as an architectural footnote to Domitian's other, far more ambitious forum that was to have occupied a vast site north of the Forum of Augustus between the Quirinal and Capitoline Hills. By mid-96 CE, a great *nymphaeum* of brick-faced concrete (a terminal display for the Aqua Marcia) had been completed.⁶¹ The land for the adjacent forum just to the north had been acquired and the necessary work of demolition was still in progress.⁶² But Domitian's assassination on 18 September (Suet. *Dom.* 17.3) ended the project and only after Nerva's death in 98 CE could the emperor Trajan, drawing on

⁵⁷ D'Ambra (1993) 16, 47–7, 112–26, figs 1, 7, 22–3, 45–83.

⁵⁸ *LTUR* 2.309.

⁵⁹ *LTUR* 2.309–11.

⁶⁰ Ward-Perkins (1981) 77.

⁶¹ Tortorici (1993) 22.

⁶² Packer (1997) 1.3–4.

the spoils of Dacia, afford to continue and complete in his own name this vast new forum.

Yet, of all Domitian's projects, his residence on the Palatine Hill is the most important (fig. 36). Distinguished from his other buildings by its extensive and well-preserved ruins, it is also noteworthy for its major historical significance. Covering much of the Palatine, it took its name from the hill on which it stood and, as the *palatium*, served as the formal residence both for generations of Roman emperors and for their early medieval successors, the Byzantine exarchs. And when finally abandoned sometime in the eighth century CE, it lent its name to royal residences (and in Italy right down to the present) to aristocratic dwellings and even to large-scale urban buildings. In some ways, Rabirius' design was an entirely conventional upper class Roman residence: rooms of varied geometric shape and size grouped around colonnaded courts embellished with gardens and elaborate fountains.⁶³ Yet its commanding, elevated location at the centre of Rome, its sheer size, its sophisticated use of its hilly site, and the lavish profusion of its expensive imported marbles raised it far above the ordinary aristocratic dwelling.

The main entrance was reached from the Clivus Palatinus, a sloping street that led up from the Via Sacra, the main road into the Forum Romanum from the south. The ancient visitor passed through an arch into the Area Palatina, a paved square closed by the massive north facade of the Domus Flavia, the official wing of the palace. Aligned with impressively scaled entrances to the main chambers of the north wing, three projecting porches with separate stairways⁶⁴ led to a Corinthian colonnade (fig. 35.1) with shafts of greyish green Carystian marble (cipollino). The first of two lower lateral rooms (on the south) was perhaps a chapel, a guardroom or a waiting room (fig. 35.4). That to the right was a *basilica*, a court-of-law (fig. 35.2).

⁶³ Such aristocratic residences, of course, owed much to the palaces of the Hellenistic World. Pertrignani (1960) 57–60.

⁶⁴ These porches have always been interpreted as platforms projecting in front of the colonnade. However, since the plan of north front of the Domus Flavia is very similar both to that of the garden facade of the (probably Domitianic) *scaenae frons* of the Theatre of Pompey and the facade of the later Basilica Ulpia (Packer [1997] 1.273 n. 27), these platforms were probably porches. The lateral one had two columns apiece; the central one had four columns. The entablature of the colonnade would have broken out at the porches.

Co-ordinated with and indicative of the impressive dimensions of the space within,⁶⁵ the facade of the Aula Regia (fig. 35.3) towered above these lateral chambers.⁶⁶ Rabirius enlivened the simple rectangular interior⁶⁷ with rows of Corinthian columns *en ressaut* standing on high pedestals. These columns divided the end walls into three bays each; the lateral walls, into five. On the short sides of the room, the entrance and the large-scale apse that faced it occupied central, curved, shallow niches (the door reduces the interior of its niche to two lateral circle segments). The two niches that flanked the door and the six on the sides of the room housed tabernacles.

All these elements were richly ornamented: even the Asiatic bases of the columns *en ressaut* had a complex iconography. On the plinths were reliefs of piled weapons. The other mouldings had vegetable decoration: the lower *torus*, an oak wreath (a civic crown); the lower *scotia*, an acanthus scroll; the double astragals, elm fronds; the upper *scotia*, ivy with berries; the upper *scotia*, acanthus leaves.⁶⁸ On the friezes of the entablatures *en ressaut*, winged victories adorned trophies supported by piles of heaped up weapons. On the returns, heraldically opposed putti, their legs ending in acanthus leaves, decorated candelabra, nestled in acanthus sprays or rode horses.⁶⁹ The cornices over the doors were as elaborately decorated as those of the *ressauts*, although the frames of the niches were plain. Colossal statues of 'metallic green Bekhen stone' about two and one-half times life size (4.46 m.) stood inside these niches.⁷⁰ Presumably the second story was about three-quarters the height of the one below. Above was either a flat ceiling⁷¹ or a vault. Bianchini (the eighteenth-

⁶⁵ According to Petrucci (1960) 57, this correspondence between the palace's interior and exterior indicates its 'maturo impianto planimetrico'.

⁶⁶ Only the lower sections of the walls of these spaces survive, but they were probably square in section. A. and C. Dutert in *Roma Antiqua* (1985) 316–18, 319–25 figs 2–3 followed by I. Gismondi in his model of Constantinian Rome in Rome's E.U.R. Museum; photographs in *All of Ancient Rome* (1992) 80–1 = herein fig. 36). Giuliani (1977) 101–6 figs 8–11 offers an unconvincing reconstruction although, like the Duterts and Gismondi (fig. 36), he assumes that the facades of the rooms on either side of the Aula Regia had the same heights.

⁶⁷ Measuring 31.44 × 32.10 m.: MacDonald (1982) 57.

⁶⁸ Bianchini (1738) 52, pl. 3.

⁶⁹ Blanckenhagen (1940) 64–7, pls 17–27; cf. Dutert in *Roma Antiqua* (1985) 321 fig. 152A.

⁷⁰ Bianchini (1738) 54 measures these statues at 'palmi 20 in altezza [= 4.468 mm]', 2 1/3 times life-size; Claridge (1998) 135 at 3.50 m., about twice life-size.

⁷¹ As, for instance, for Giuliani (1977) 98 n. 7, who dismisses Bianchini's vault

century excavator of this wing of the palace), however, apparently found fragments of coffered vaults;⁷² and the great width of the room's walls also suggests vaulting.⁷³ In any case, a flat ceiling would not have left space for windows above the entablature of the upper order.⁷⁴ Thus we must follow Dutert, Gismondi and MacDonald in supposing a vaulted room.⁷⁵ A barrel vault would have allowed, at the short ends of the hall, for thermal windows; a groin vault would have added two others at the lateral ends of the cross-vault.⁷⁶ Four such windows would have flooded the interior with light.

Behind the Aula Regia and its dependencies stood a large-scale peristyle originally called the Sicilia (*SHA Pert.* 11.6; fig. 35.27). Reminding the ancient visitor of the use of same marble in the Basilica and the Aula Regia, its fluted Composite columns with fluted shafts of pavonazzeto and porta santa⁷⁷ framed an impressively sized court (38.25 × 42 m.), largely occupied by rectangular, marble-clad fountain with elaborately curvilinear sides and a central octagonal labyrinth made up of low walls separated by water channels. On the west wide of the court behind the colonnade, lay a remarkable suite of

fragments (see below, n. 72) as 'non . . . sufficiente a testimoniare la presenza della grande botte, potendosi riferire, dato anche l'uso del plurale, ai crolli dei due ordini di archi'.

⁷² Bianchini (1738) 48–50 'cementi delle volte caduti'; cited by Dutert, *Roma Antiqua* (1985) 317; MacDonald (1982) 57 n. 34.

⁷³ Petrucci (1960) fig. 5 shows that, between the niches, the walls had a width of 3.17 m. By comparison, the second-story buttresses for the vault of the central hall of the Markets of Trajan were at 1.40 m., less than half as wide: Lancaster (1998) 289 fig. 5.

⁷⁴ The walls of the *basilica* survive to a height of 16.30 m.: Giuliani (1977) 99, 100 fig. 6; Claridge (1998) 135—but since both the *basilica* and the *lararium* (plus the rooms just west of the *lararium*) had an internal widths of 21 m., they were presumably the same height. Thus the walls of these chambers would have blocked second-story windows in the Aula Regia (see below, n. 75).

⁷⁵ Dutert in *Roma Antiqua* (1985) 317, 322–3 figs 154–5; MacDonald (1982) 56–63. Bianchini (1738) pl. 5 gives the height of the lower order on its pedestal as 10.67 m. (about 36 1/4 Roman feet). This would suggest an upper story 8 m. (about 27 1/4 feet) high. Both orders together would have risen to 18.67 m., leaving a space of slightly less than 13 m. (12.83 m.) to the crown of a vault as high as the room was wide. A radius of that height would indicate that, in profile, the vault was probably only a circle-segment.

⁷⁶ In his model, Gismondi (see above, n. 66, fig. 36) also lights the interior by front and back thermal windows. But, for Dutert, quoted in *Roma Antiqua* (1985) 317, the windows at the sides of the building were essential: 'Elle devait, de même que les voûtes des thermes, être disposée de manière à ménager quatre grands espaces pour les quatre fenêtres indispensables à l'éclairage . . . '.

⁷⁷ Gibson, Delaine and Claridge (1994) 87–8.

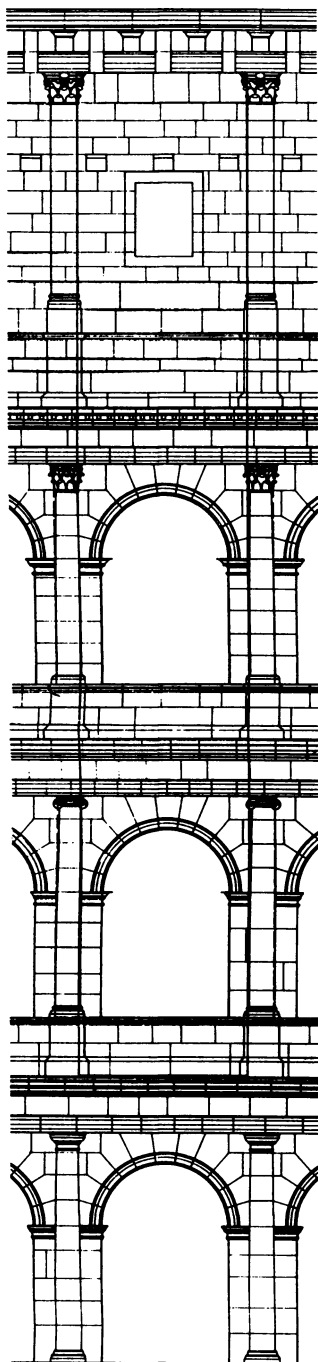


Fig. 27. Bay of the Colosseum, After Wilson Jones (1993) fig. 33.

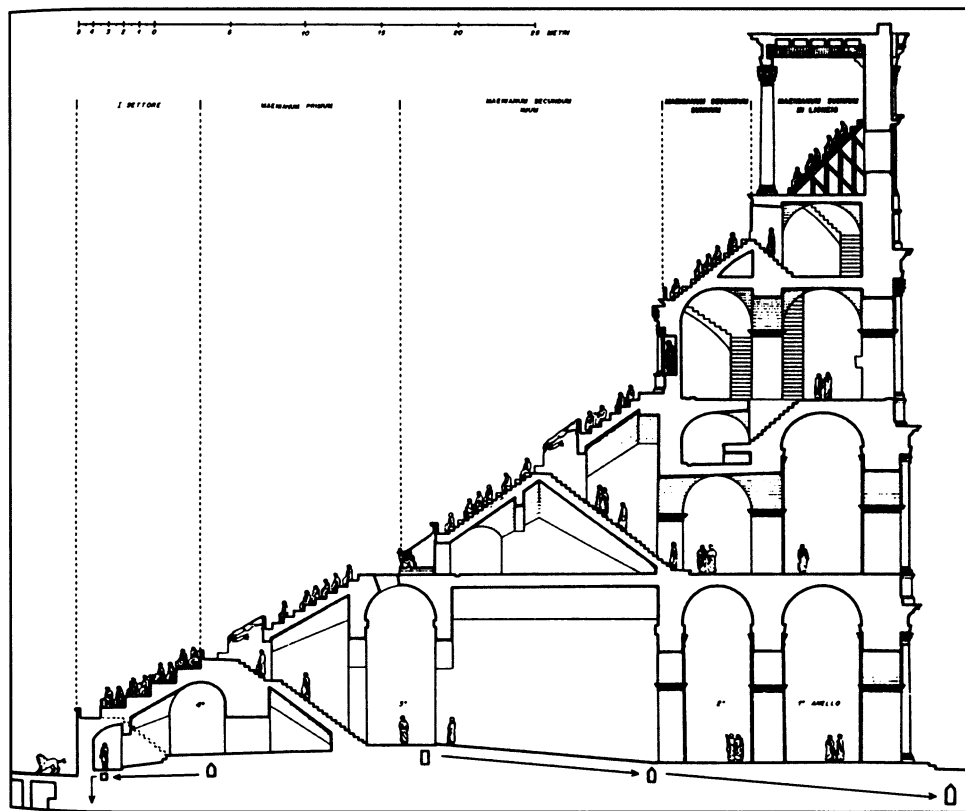


Fig. 28. Section of the Colosseum. After Wilson Jones (1993) fig. 32.

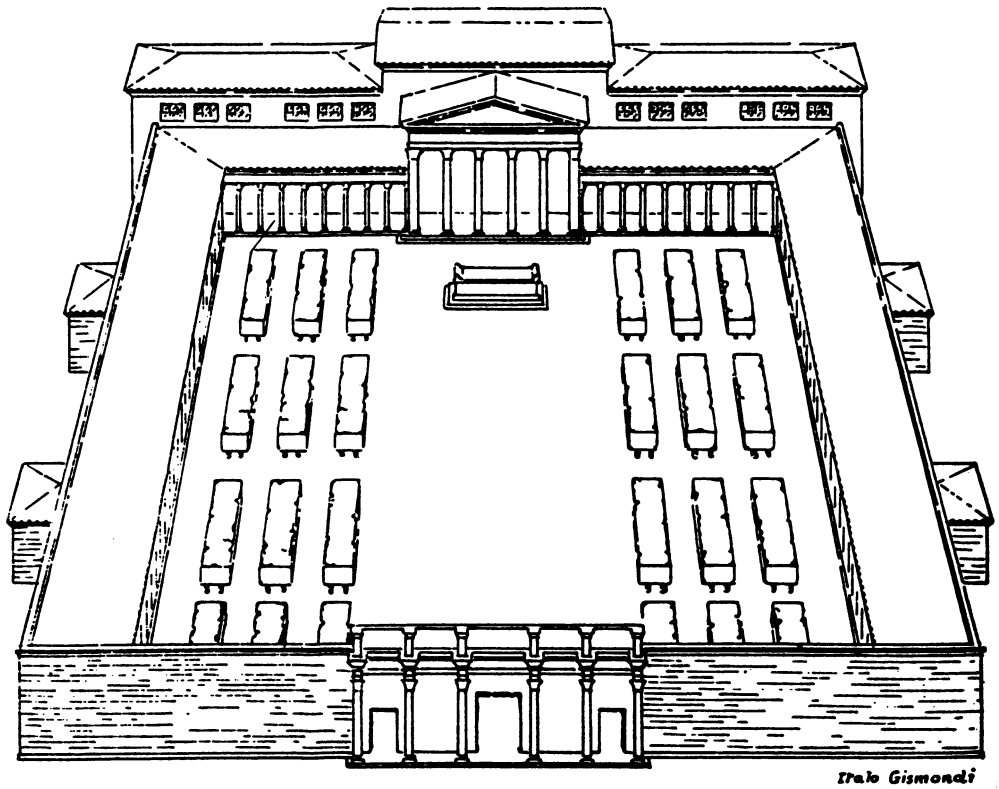


Fig. 29. Reconstructed view of the Temple of Peace. Colini (1937) pl. 4.

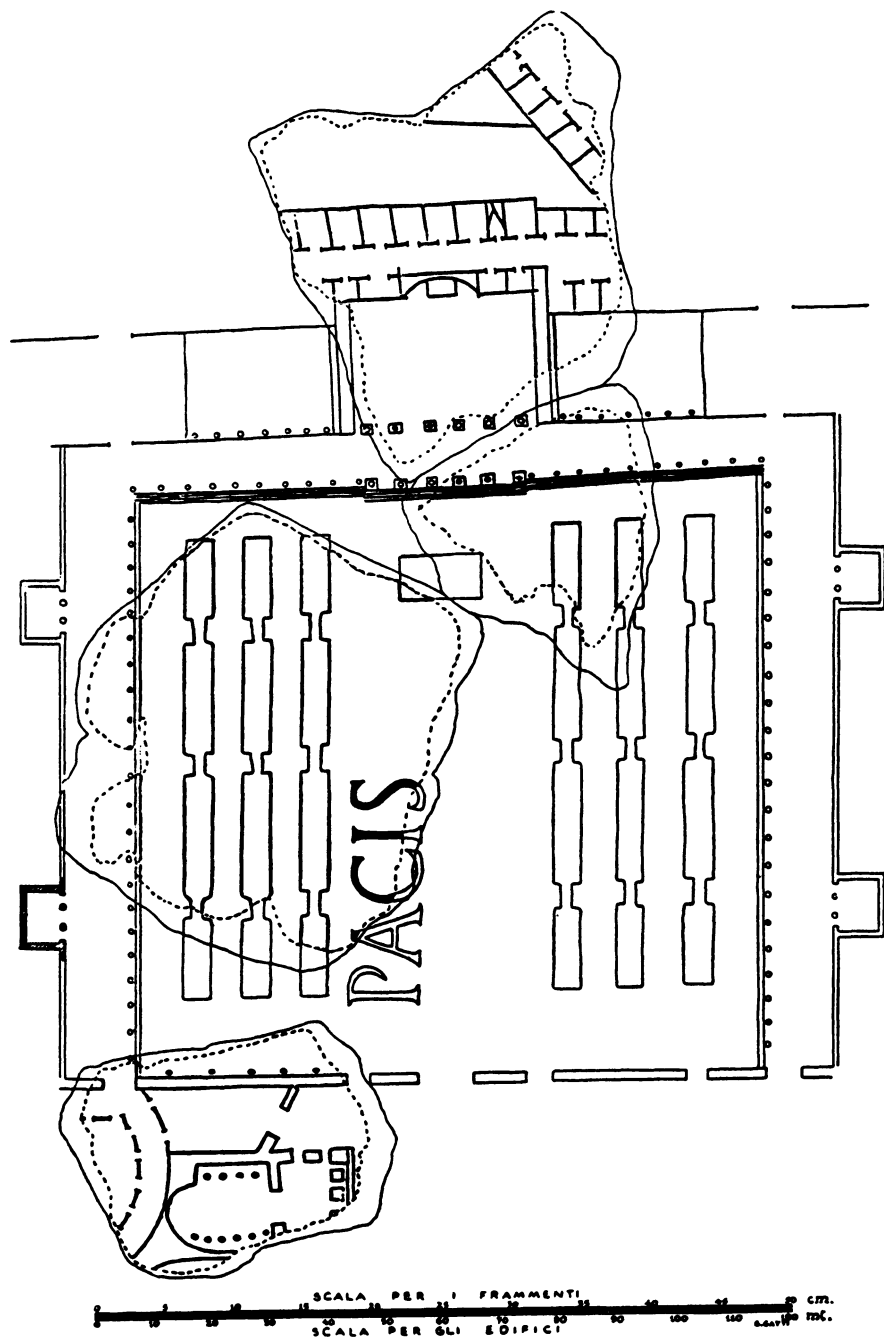


Fig. 30. Plan of the Temple of Peace on the Forma Urbis. Colini (1937) pl. 3.

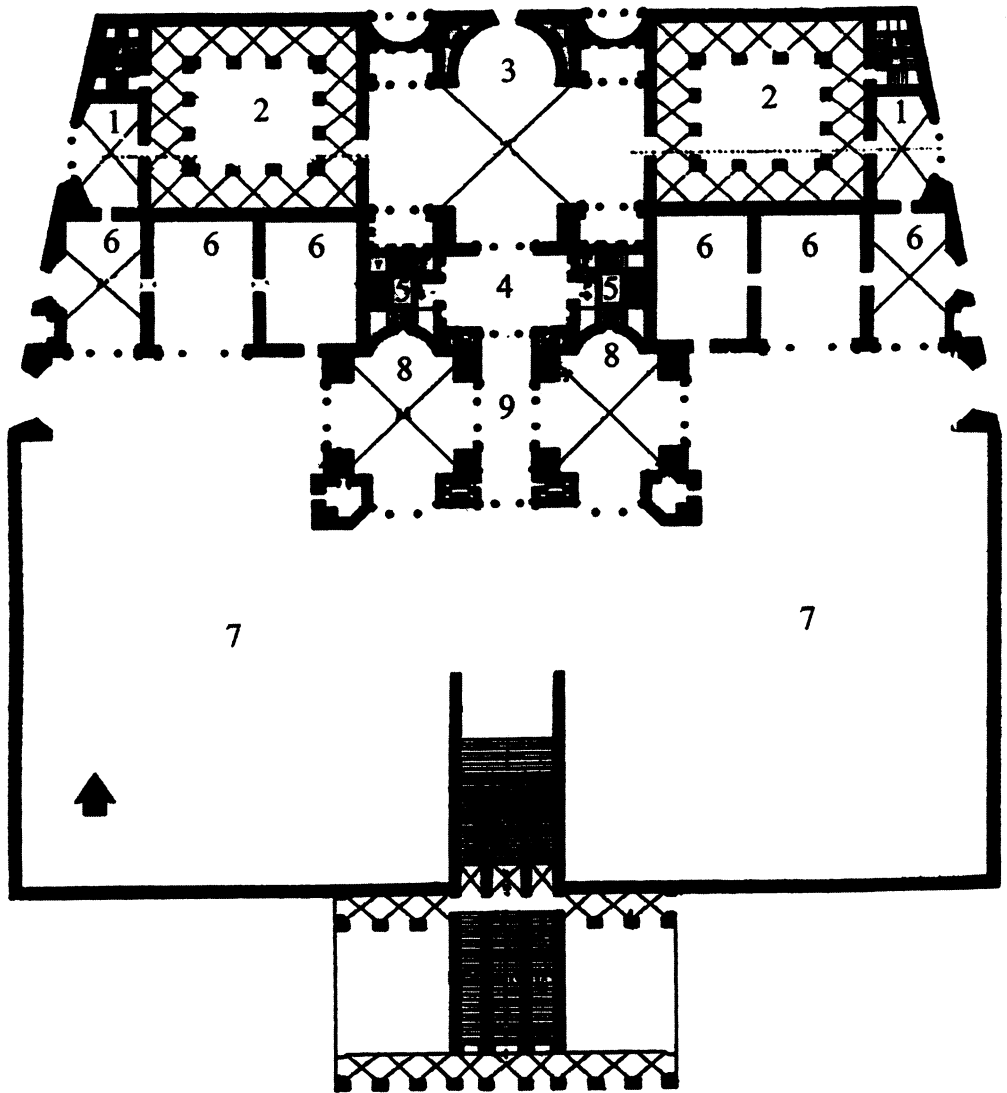


Fig. 31. Palladio's plan of the Baths of Titus. After Yegül (1992) fig. 152.

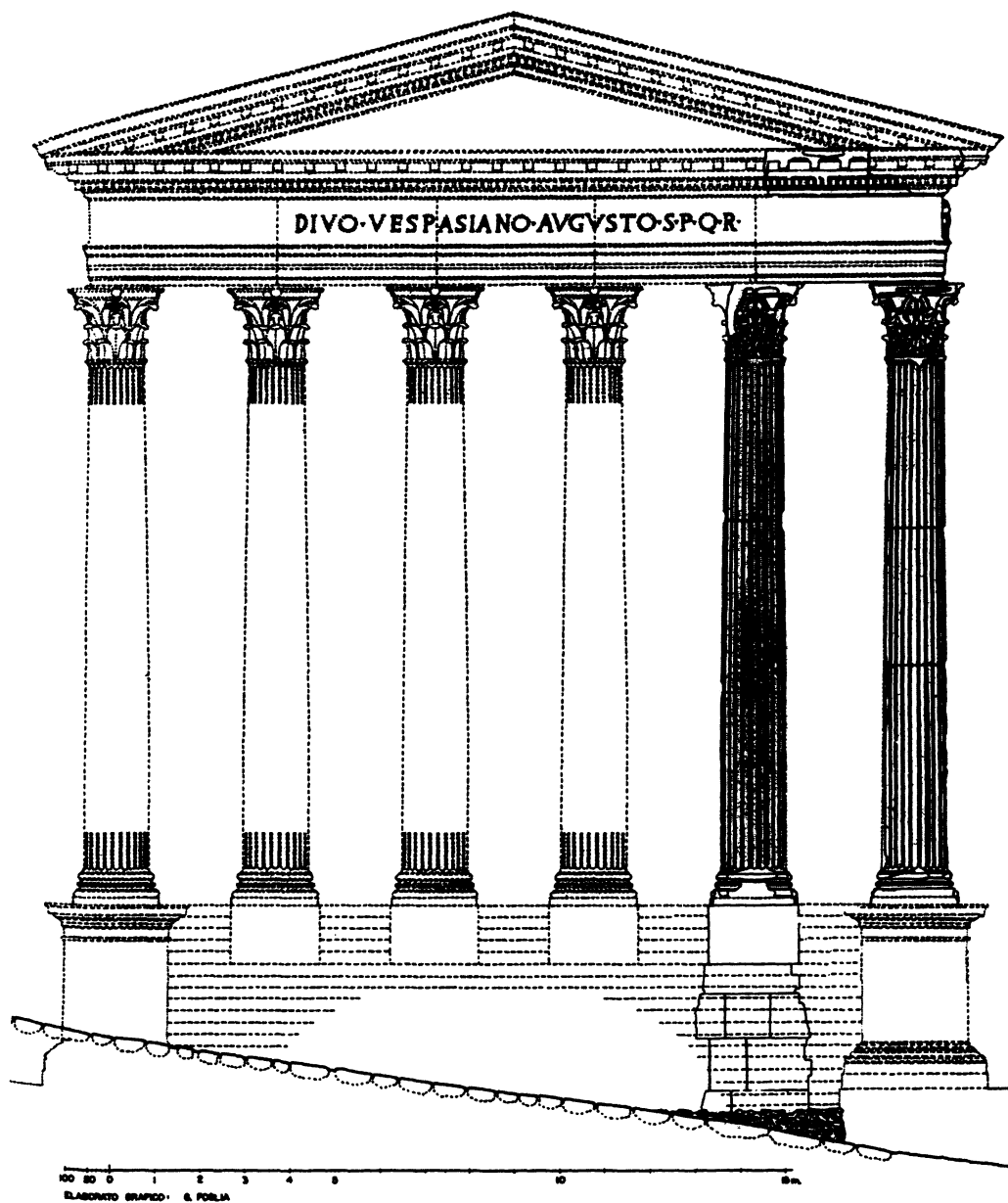


Fig. 32. Reconstructed elevation of the Temple of Vespasian. De Angeli (1992) fig. 144.

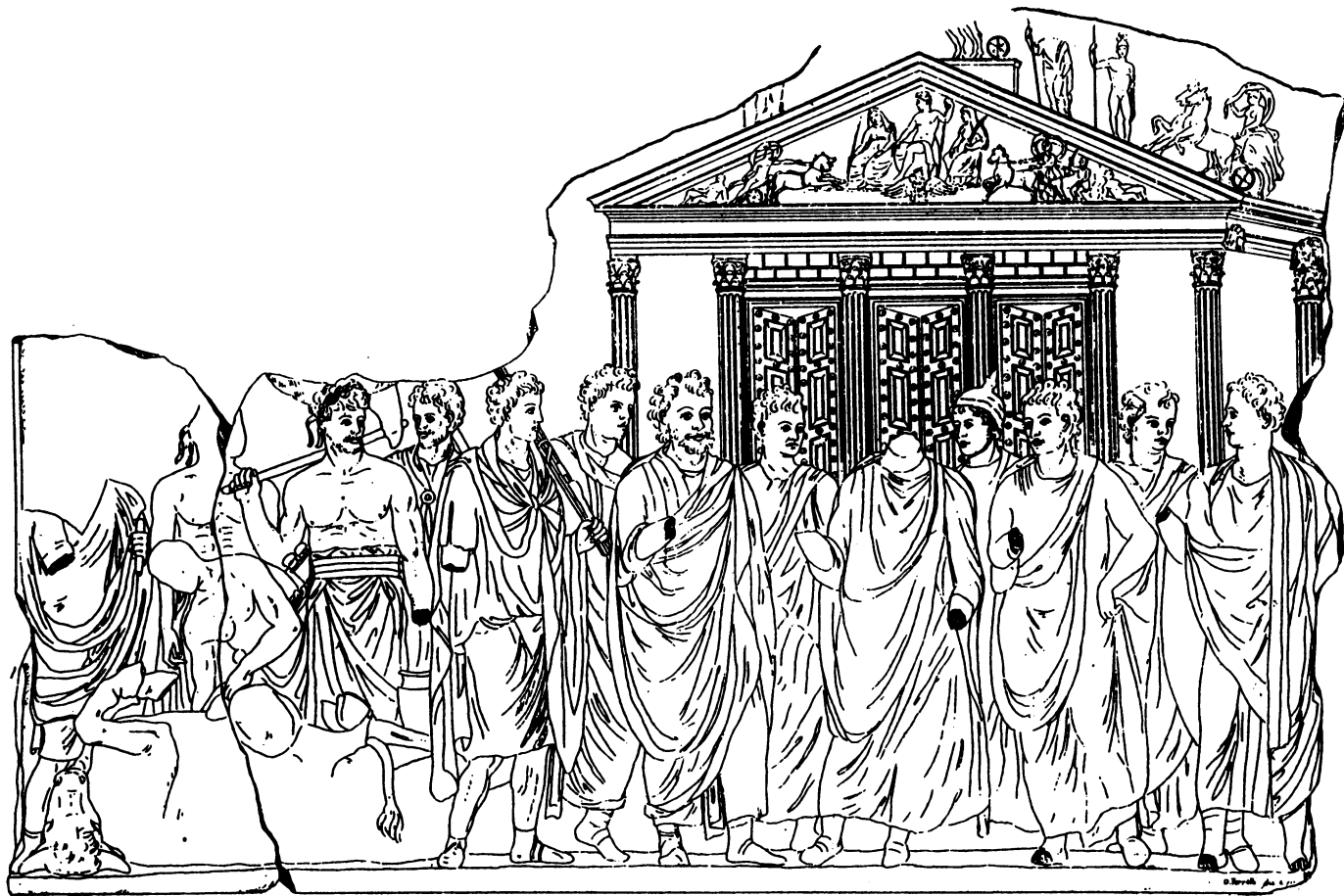


Fig. 33. Reconstructed Trajanic relief showing the facade of Domitian's Temple of the Capitoline Jupiter. Wace (1907) pl. 29.

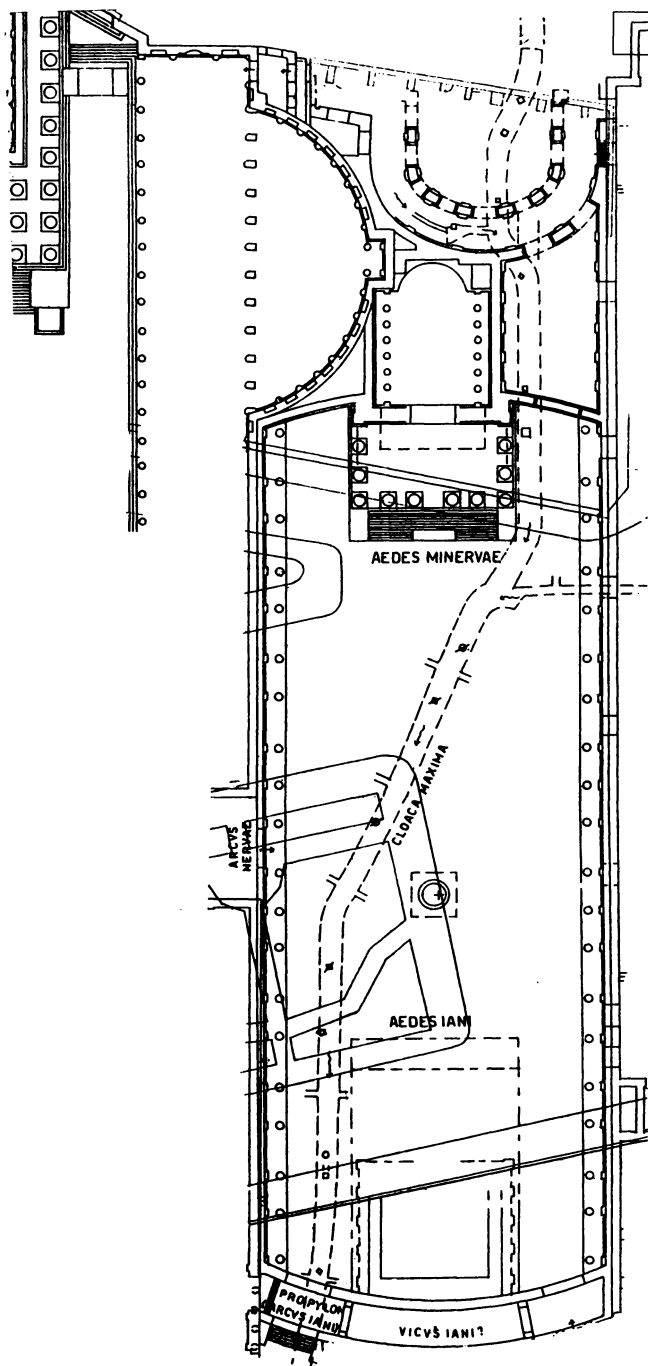


Fig. 34. Plan of the Forum Transitorium. After Bauer (1967-77) pl. D.

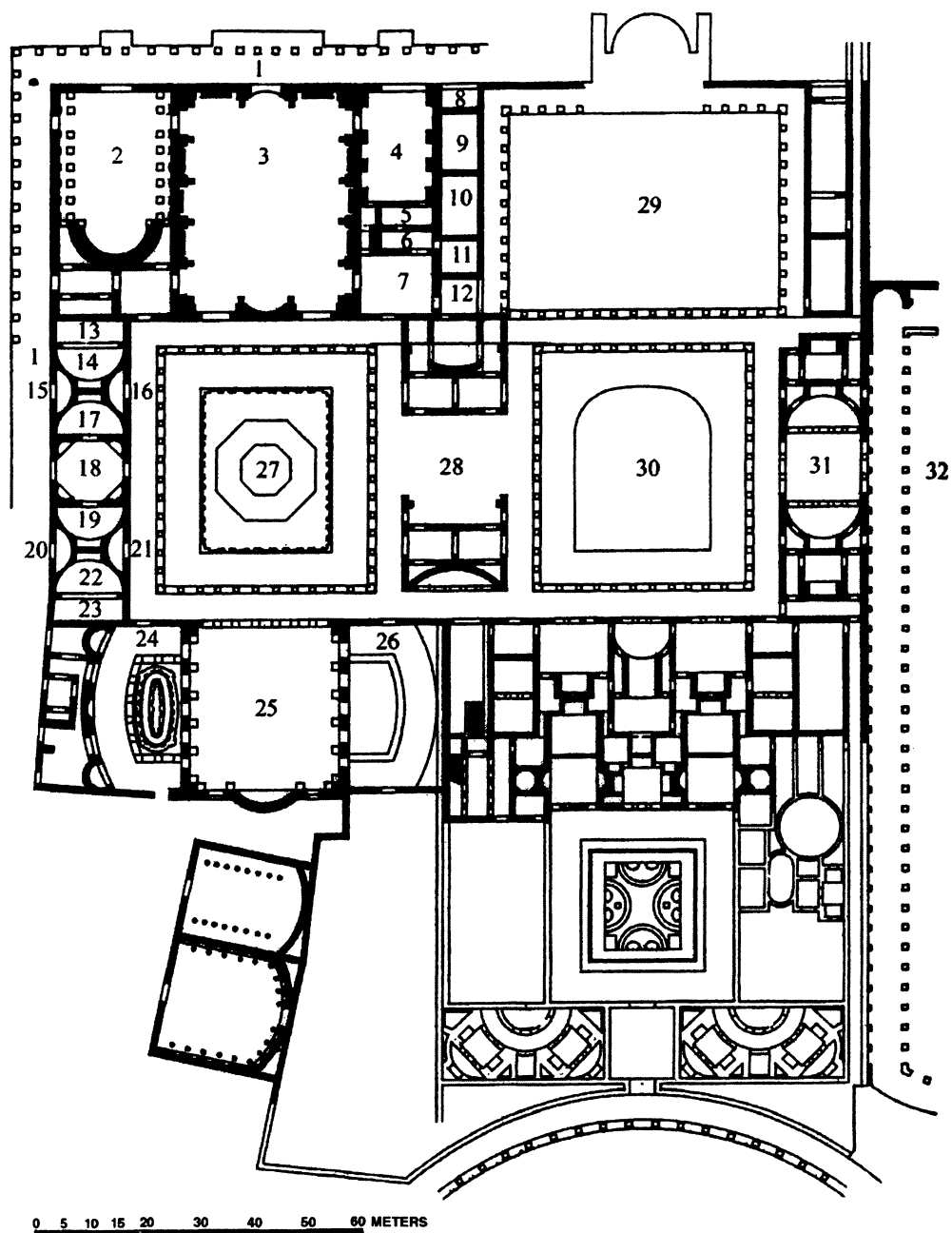


Fig. 35. Plan of the Domus Flavia. After MacDonald (1982) pl. 40.



Fig. 36. Model of the Imperial Palaces (scale 1:250) looking northwest toward the Colosseum (upper middle): Italo Gismondi. The large gabled building with the prominent 'thermal window' (upper left) is the Aula Regia; the smaller one with the rear apse, the Iovis Cenatio. The two-storey colonnade above the Circus Maximus fronts the Domus Augustana. Courtesy of Museo della Civiltà Romana, Rome. Photograph by H. N. Serra.

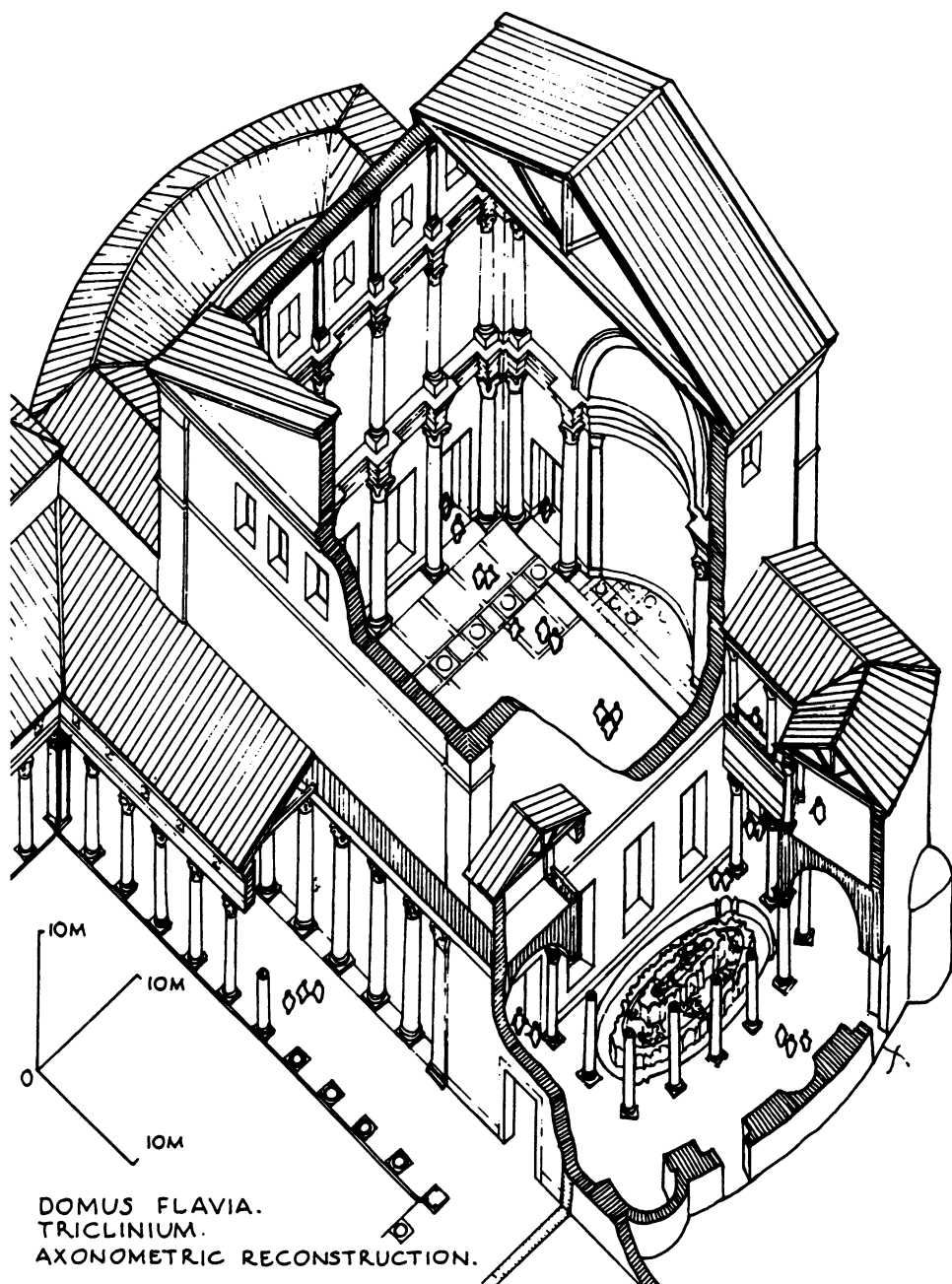


Fig. 37. Restored view of the 'Iovis Cenatio'. Gibson *et al.* (1994) 91 fig. 29.

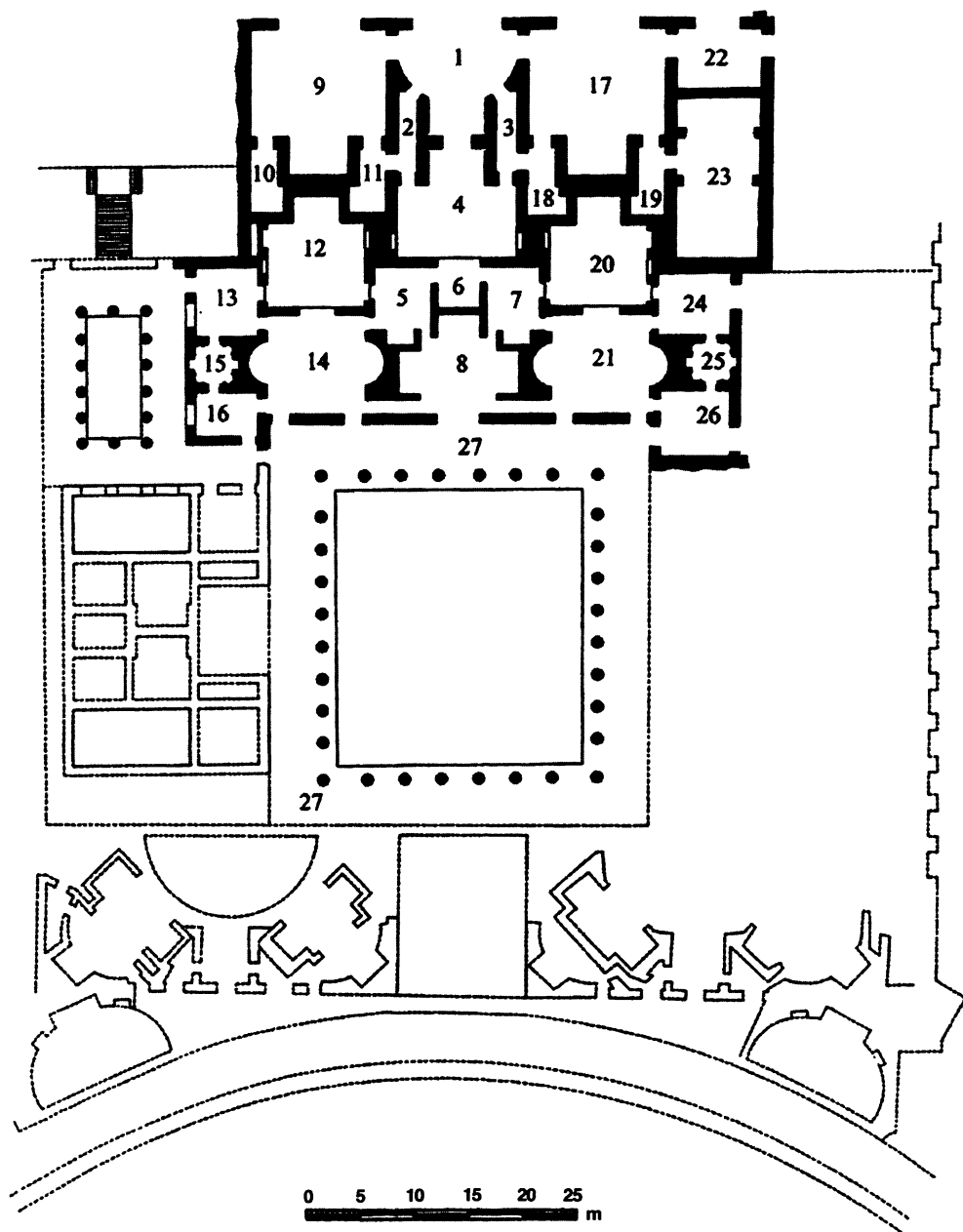


Fig. 38. Plan of the upper level of the Domus Augustana. Wataghan Cantino (1996) pl. 4.

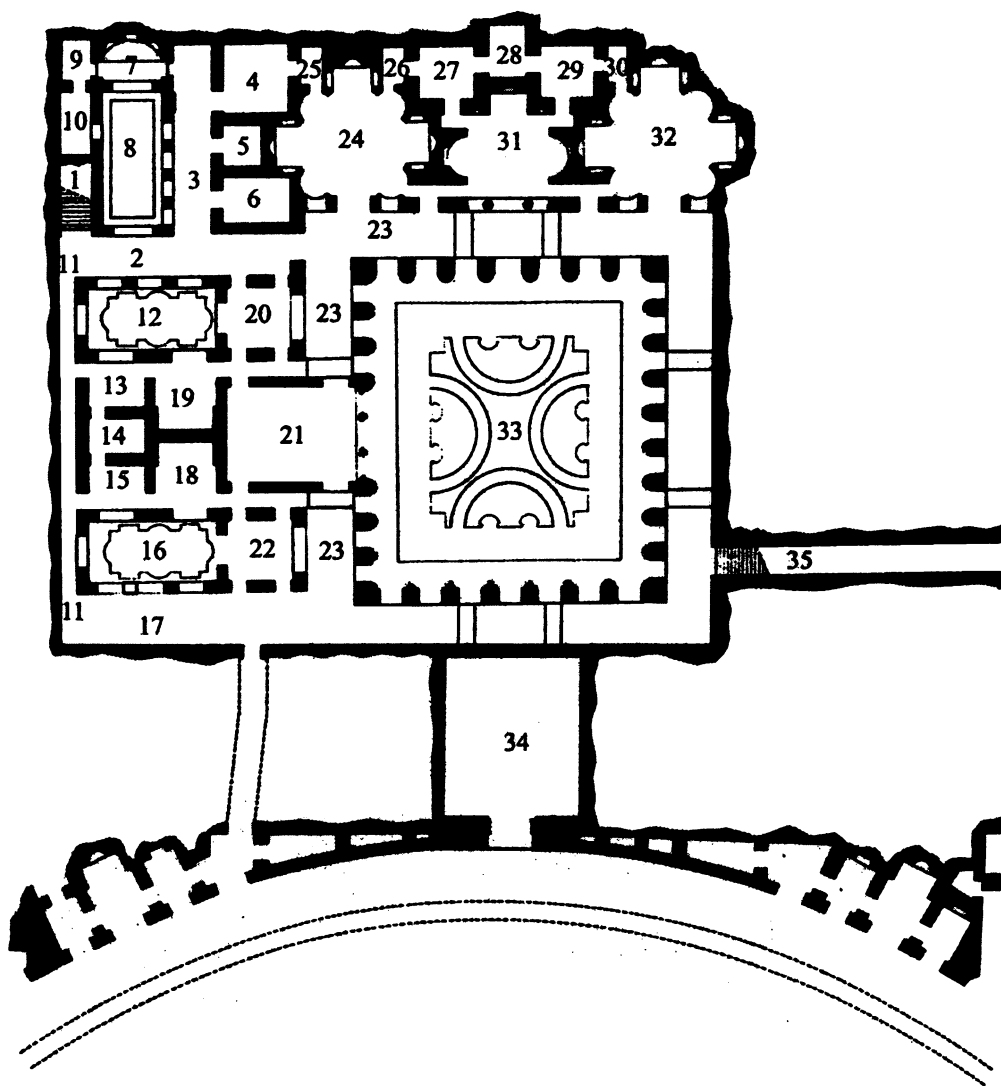


Fig. 39. Plan of the lower level of the Domus Augustana. Wataghan Cantino (1966) pl. 5.

interconnected 'withdrawing rooms' (fig. 35.13–23). In plan, the central chamber (fig. 35.18), a small domed vestibule for visitors approaching the palace from the west,⁷⁸ was a hexagon inscribed in a square. On each wall, a door marked the axis; the dome and semi-circular niches at the corners of the room visually expanded the interior. An oculus will have provided the necessary light. The flanking suites to the north and south (fig. 35.13–17, 19–23) were identical combinations of semi-circular and rectangular chambers. All these rooms (except the alcoves—fig. 35.13, 23—which may have been barrel vaulted) will have had semi-domes, probably concealed from above by either a flat terrace or a low gabled roof.⁷⁹ In their original state, with their convoluted walls and domes adorned with mosaics, stuccos and coloured marbles, the effect of these smoothly interpenetrating geometrical parlours must have been memorable.

At the back of the Sicilia, aligned with the Aula Regia, stood Domitian's banqueting hall (fig. 35.25, 37), the Iovis Cenatio (*SHA Pert.* 11.6). The low attic of the Sicilia masked the rise of the higher fluted pavonazzetto Composite columns that screened its entrance.⁸⁰ The interior dimensions (28.97 × 31.66 m.)⁸¹ were nearly as impressive as those of the Aula Regia. An order of engaged grey granite Corinthian columns *en ressaut* (the same size as the columns at the entrance) divided the lateral walls into five bays. High windows in the central ones brought in light, air and (when open in the summer) cooling breezes generated by water sprays from fountains in the neighbouring open courts. On the back wall, opposite the columned entrance (which extended across the front of the whole room), a wide shallow niche framed by columns marked the emperor's position of honour among his guests. On the front and lateral walls of the second story, engaged Corinthian columns on high pedestals,⁸²

⁷⁸ Hypothesised by Dutert in *Roma Antiqua* (1985) 322–3 fig. 5; followed by MacDonald (1982) 54.

⁷⁹ F. Dutert suggests the terrace in *Roma Antiqua* (1985) 322 fig. 154; the Gismondi model, the gabled roof, illustrated in *All of Ancient Rome* (1992) 80–1 (fig. 36).

⁸⁰ Gibson, Delaine and Claridge (1994) 86.

⁸¹ Dimensions taken from Gibson, Delaine and Claridge (1994) 99 foldout 1.

⁸² The shafts are not preserved: Gibson, Delaine and Claridge (1994) 84. They were perhaps fluted and of either pavonazzetto or giallo antico: since the lower columns had shafts of grey granite, Gibson, Delaine and Claridge (1994) 83, not the 'giallo antico' indicated by Claridge (1998) 136. Statius' mention (*Sib.* 4.2.18–31), translated in Claridge (1998) 138, of 'Libyan mountain [giallo antico] and gleaming Ilian stone [pavonazzetto]' probably refers to the shafts of this order.

positioned above the lower columns, framed bays with windows aligned with those on the first floor.⁸³ Since, like the Aula Regia, the room was probably designed as a square as high as it was wide, the gilded coffered ceiling that concealed the timber-truss roof⁸⁴ (Stat. *Silv.* 4.2.30: *auratique putes laquearia caeli*) was about twenty-nine metres above the floor.⁸⁵ As elsewhere in the palace, the walls and floors were revetted with multicoloured marbles; the designs on the walls were probably geometric; those of the pavements, both geometric and curvilinear.⁸⁶

Doors at the ends of the lateral walls led to the adjacent fountain courts (fig. 35.24, 26). Each was approximately rectangular, but the back wall facing the two entrances followed a gentle curve broken by three circular niches, two larger ones at the corners, a smaller one in the centre. Vaulted on the lower level, a two-story Corinthian colonnade with fluted giallo antico shafts tightly framed an open centre almost entirely occupied by an oval fountain. The sides of the lower basin and those of the raised central one were scalloped into intricately curvilinear shapes originally veneered with coloured marbles and surmounted by statues.⁸⁷

To the south lay the somewhat larger Domus Augustana (fig. 35.29–31), probably the private wing of the palace. Like the Domus Flavia, it was organised around at least two peristyles (figs 35.30, 39.33). A possible third to the east (fig. 35.29) is poorly preserved and incompletely excavated. To the north, the central peristyle opened into the Sicilia through a spacious tablinum (fig. 35.28) flanked on

⁸³ I differ here from Gibson, Delaine and Claridge (1994) 74, 87.

⁸⁴ Gibson, Delaine and Claridge (1994) 99 foldout 1 give the width of the walls as 1.66 m., about half the 3.17 m. width of the walls of the Aula Regia (see above, n. 7). This difference suggests a timber-truss roof: Gibson, Delaine and Claridge (1994) 77–80.

⁸⁵ Lower than in Gibson, Delaine and Claridge (1994) 67–100, since the surviving fragments add up to slightly less than 29 m.; of the hypothetical third-story order proposed by Gibson *et al.* [1994] 81, 91 fig. 29, only a single—dubious?—fragment survives.

⁸⁶ The surviving baseboard moulding (in the west apse and on the north wall) had a 'giallo antico dado' below a 'pavonazzetto' moulding (Gibson, Delaine and Claridge [1994] 93); the marbles used for the floor (a late restoration of the fourth and perhaps fifth centuries CE) include alabaster, nero antico, cipollino, giallo antico, porta santa, pavonazzetto and grey granite. See Gibson, Delaine and Claridge (1994) 74–6; Claridge (1998) 138–9. This floor, may, however, be a later restoration of the original designs.

⁸⁷ Neuerburg (1965) 221–2; best seen in MacDonald (1982) pl. 50 and Gibson, Delaine and Claridge (1994) 70 fig. 4.

the east and west by two suites of largely rectangular rooms. Through the intervening colonnades, this hall commanded views both of the hexagonal fountain in the Sicilia and of the pool in the central peristyle of the Domus Augustana (fig. 35.30). With its curved east side and miniature temple (on an island connected with the west branch of the peristyle by a small bridge), this pool took up most of the interior of the central peristyle. South of the peristyle, facing the *tablinum* on the same axis and overlooking the sunken stadium (fig. 35.32) was a large reception hall with apses (fig. 35.31). Columnar screens divided its centre from the apses and behind them were small suites of secondary rooms.

The relatively well preserved (and heavily restored) rooms on the west side of the central court are arranged in three interconnecting, parallel apartments (fig. 38.1–8, 9–16, 17–26). Of different heights, all of the principal chambers will have been sheathed in coloured marbles and mosaics, which, reflecting light introduced from a variety of sources, obvious and concealed, must have played across the voids and solids of the varied wall surfaces to produce shimmering surreal effects.⁸⁸

Two corner stairs—a north-east one of masonry (fig. 39.1); a south-east one of wood (fig. 39.35)—connected the upper palace with a lower story ten metres below the rest of the Domus Augustana. Like those on the floor above, the rooms on this level were arranged around a two-story court (fig. 39.33).⁸⁹ The lower arcade had engaged Ionic half-columns; the upper Corinthian colonnade carried arches. As in the other palace courts a large fountain occupied the central open space. Channels shaped its central island into a curvilinear middle element flanked on all four sides by shield-shaped segments (*peltae*). Veneered with marble, these would have carried columnar superstructures (miniature tabernacles?) that would have framed and enhanced statuary.⁹⁰

The rooms were laid out in an L-shaped area on the north and east sides of the peristyle. The imperial apartments occupied a north wing (fig. 39.1–23) subdivided into east and west sections (fig. 39.1–10,

⁸⁸ Neuerburg (1965) 223–5, identifies the apse and large rectangular rooms just off the peristyle and the small octagonal chambers as *nymphaea*; cf. MacDonald (1982) 64–5.

⁸⁹ Wataghan Cantino (1966) 36–9.

⁹⁰ Wataghan Cantino (1966) 39–40.

11–22) and dominated by no less than three rectangular fountain courts (fig. 39.8, 12, 16) framed by two-story arcades. Bordered on the north by the north-east access stair and on the west by a corridor leading to the central peristyle, the east suite was devoted to recreation. Its arcaded court (fig. 39.8) framed a rectangular *piscina*, which completely filled the open interior. East of the court lay the emperor's apsidal, marble-clad latrine (fig. 39.7)⁹¹ lighted by a generously proportioned arched window, which opened into the *piscina*. On either side of a central statue niche, small apses framed the two stools. Reached both by an antechamber north of the emperor's latrine and by a stair from the *piscina*, a larger latrine under the stair (fig. 39.10) accommodated the emperor's immediate entourage. Three unequally sized, windowless rooms (fig. 39.4–6) south of the broad corridor (fig. 39.3) that led to the imperial latrine and the swimming pool may have been either staff dormitories or storerooms.

Corridors (fig. 39.2, 11, 17, 23) ran around all four sides of the U-shaped residential west suite. At its east and west corners, again framed by arcades, were fountain courts (fig. 39.12, 16). The sides of the central low, oval basins, revetted with white marble, alternated rectangular and semicircular hollows. On the north was the emperor's *cubiculum* (fig. 39.14), a tiny rectangle reached by two lateral doors from flanking antechambers (fig. 39.13, 15). Accessible both from the rear hall and from two parlours just behind the emperor's room (fig. 39.18–19), these gave access to two narrow corridors (fig. 39.23) that flanked a spacious south *tablinum* (fig. 39.21) that, extending across the north branch of arcade around the court, opened a dystyle screen facing the central fountain between two of its piers.

Separated from the rock of the Palatine by seven windowless rectangular rooms (storerooms? dormitories?), the north wing consisted of three elegant reception halls (fig. 39.24, 31, 32). All opened into the central colonnade through dystyle columnar screens, but while the two larger lateral chambers were octagonal, the central one was rectangular. In all three, alternating rectangular and semicircular niches transformed the walls into varied sequences of complex surfaces. Segmental pumpkin domes still roof the side halls; a now col-

⁹¹ According to Neuerburg (1965) 222–3 (followed by Wataghan Cantino [1966] 29), this was a *nymphaeum* later transformed into a latrine.

lapsed barrel vault, the centre room. When furnished with statuary and veneered with coloured marbles dimly reflecting light from the brightly lit peristyle, these rooms must have been cool, marvellously diverting retreats from the burning heat of a Roman summer.

In fact, while the design of the lower level utilised the same elements that appear in the upper palace, several significant architectural variations identify these apartments (together with the adjacent stadium [fig. 35.32], a sunken garden on the same level framed by arcades) as the in-town summer retreat of the emperor and his staff. Since the west face of the hill survived (although externally configured as a vast shallow hemicycle behind a two-story colonnade), the lower wing was, in effect, set into deep pit that insulated its rooms from summer temperatures. The central peristyle and adjacent fountain courts gave natural illumination, but this was light without heat. And the *piscina* in the north-east corner and three fountains all show that, on this level, Rabirius' primary concern was to create a an elegant retreat from the oppressive, humid warmth of a Roman summer. During the damp, chill winter months, the emperor and his staff must have resided in the lighter (and better heated) apartments on the west side of the Domus Augustana, leaving the lower wing largely uninhabited.

Thus the buildings of the Flavians, like those of their predecessors, expressed many different themes. They commemorated the restoration of public order after the internecine warfare of 68–69 CE (the Temple of Peace). They provided suitably impressive venues for political life in officially approved state settings (the Temple of Peace, the Forum Transitorium, Domitian's planned Forum Magnum on the site of the later Forum of Trajan). They monumentalised the emperor's piety, imperial and familial (the Temples of Capitoline Jupiter, Vespasian and Minerva). They demonstrated his care for his subjects' physical well being and entertainment (the Baths of Titus and the Colosseum). They expressed his concern for the emotional, physical and recreational needs of Rome's inhabitants (the demolition of Nero's Domus Aurea and the construction of the Baths of Titus, and the Amphitheatrum Flavianum). They stressed his power and splendour. Not only was he head of state in all its manifestations but also, during Domitian's reign, a living god, a *dominus et deus*. And, whatever the purpose of the individual building, all these structures—and the many not treated here—helped, by the vast costs of their materials, by the wages paid to the enormous numbers of

skilled craftsmen and untrained labourers required to erect them, to support Rome's working classes.⁹² Their construction was thus a large-scale and long-continued demonstration of imperial *providentia*.

Their designs and materials recalled, while visibly surpassing, the great architecture of the past. Installed in prominent positions, their inscriptions reminded passers-by of the emperor's official titles. Reliefs immortalised his deeds; statues on appropriately labelled pedestals commemorated the lives and careers of his most prominent supporters. And everywhere, these buildings emphasised the emperor's fitness to lead. They publicly displayed his most famous booty (like the seven-branched candlestick from the Temple in Jerusalem shown in the Temple of Peace and portrayed on the reliefs of the Arch of Titus). They immortalised his wisdom and its divine patrons (the Temple of Minerva); they stressed the accomplishments and divinity of his deceased relatives (Arch of Titus and the Temple of Vespasian). The imperial palace housed the emperor in a manner far above that to which a mere mortal could aspire; the friezes and decorative statuary in its reception hall, the *Aula Regia*, underscored his triumphs and his connections with the gods. And finally, once built, with their central locations, enormous size and rich materials—expensive imported marbles, gilded bronzes, glass and marble mosaic, intricate painted stuccos—these buildings were the grandiose, three-dimensional expressions of state propaganda, the impressive visualisations of imperial pomp and majesty.⁹³ While they stood, Rome stood; when they fell, Rome fell; when Rome fell, the world fell.⁹⁴

⁹² Cf. Bengtson (1979) 87; De Laine (1997) 201.

⁹³ As Darwall-Smith (1996) 252–62, has pointed out, the projects of the first two Flavians portrayed them as 'constitutional fathers of their country', builders for the common good. Domitian's works (particularly the imperial palace) underscored his rather more despotic views. Yet whatever stimulated the individual Flavian to build, his most successful and durable architecture necessarily expressed not only his ambitions but also those of all his subjects in Rome.

⁹⁴ A paraphrase of that famous remark on the Colosseum attributed (perhaps spuriously) to Bede: *Quandiu stat Colisaeus, stat et Roma; quando cadet Colisaeus, cadet et Roma: quando cadet Roma, cadet et mundus* (Migne [1862] 543, cited by Colagrossi [1913] 136 n. 3 and by Lega [1989–90] 366 n. 30). The latter suggests that by *Colisaeus* Bede meant the Colossus of Nero (see above, p. 168), not the Colosseum.

7. ARCHITECTURE AND SURVEILLANCE IN FLAVIAN ROME

David Fredrick

Censor maxime principumque princeps,
cum tot iam tibi debeat triumphos,
tot nascentia templa, tot renata,
tot spectacula, tot deos, tot urbes:
plus debet tibi Roma quod pudica est.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 6.6.1–5)

Most powerful Censor and leader of leaders,
granted that Rome owes you already so many triumphs,
so many new temples, and so many renewed,
so many spectacles, so many gods, so many cities:
Rome owes still more to you that fact that she is chaste.

The rebuilding of the Capitoline early in the reign of Vespasian (Tac. *Hist.* 4.53) illustrates well the enduring connection, in Roman culture, between architecture, boundaries and ritual purity. Under a cloudless sky the temple precinct is enclosed with fillets and garlands. Soldiers with favourable names carry sprigs from well-omened trees, while the Vestal Virgins, together with boys and girls with living parents, sprinkle the *templum* with spring water. The sacrifice of a pig, a sheep and a bull purifies the enclosure, and the entrails are laid out on an altar of turf. The praetor, Helvidius Priscus, prays that the gods will raise up and bring to prosperity their new home begun through human piety, and touches the fillets wrapped around the foundation stone and its ropes. ‘At the same time, the rest of the magistrates, the priests, the senate, the knights and a great part of the people, labouring with eagerness and joy, dragged along the immense stone’ (*simul ceteri magistratus et sacerdotes et senatus et eques et magna pars populi, studio laetitiae conixi, saxum ingens traxere*).

Because Roman architecture is so intimately connected with sacred boundaries and actions, the rebuilding of a temple—especially the Capitoline—can create the illusion of a social order renewed. Each in their proper rank, Rome’s people seem to rediscover a sense of purpose rooted in the sequence of sacrificial actions and the place

itself. Together, the location and the rituals construct the image of a *mundus* unblemished, from the pure sky and water to the unstained victims and virgin ore poured into the foundation. The human actors similarly appear without a trace of moral corruption or political strife. Nothing could be further from the truth than this image of *Romanitas* reinvigorated around the Capitoline stone, as Tacitus well knew. Immediately before this passage, the proconsul in Africa, Lucius Piso, is suspected of Vitellian sympathies and murdered by a legionary commander; immediately after it, Civilis leads the Germans and Gauls in revolt, and several legions promptly desert. In rhetorical terms, the renewal of the Capitoline is no match for its destruction in the war between Vitellius and Vespasian, which Tacitus describes as 'the most mournful and foul crime to have ever happened to the republic of the Roman people' (*id facinus . . . luctuosissimum foedissimumque rei publicae Romani populi accidit*, *Hist.* 3.72).¹ The Capitol itself would burn again just ten years later, in 80 CE, to be rebuilt by Domitian and gilt with gold at a cost of twelve thousand talents. Domitian's glittering Capitoline was a ready symbol of tyrannical abuse and moral decay. About this Capitoline Plutarch would have Epicharmus remark to Domitian, 'You, to be sure, are neither pious nor magnificent. You have a disease—your insane desire to build—just like Midas, wishing that everything for you would turn into gold or stone' (οὐκ εὐσεβὴς οὐδὲ φιλότιμος τὸ γ' ἐσσί· ἔχεις νόσον· χαίρεις κατοικοδομῶν, ὥσπερ ὁ Μίδας ἐκεῖνος, ἅπαντά σοι χρυσᾶ καὶ λίθινα Βουλόμενος γίνεσθαι, *Publ.* 15.5).

In the passage from Tacitus, the equation of religious order with political harmony is intentionally ironic, revealing the ability of ritual and architecture to act as masks. Nevertheless, it emphasises the close connection between architecture and the *res publica* to achieve this affect. For the elite in the late republic, involvement in the religious and political life of the *res publica* necessarily depended on access to the major forms of public architecture—to the rostrum during *contiones*, to the Curia for meetings of the senate, to temple platforms and altars to control the performance of augury and sacrifice.² Through political competition, access to these very privileged spaces was both

¹ Cf. Edwards (1996) 82: 'though the temple is rebuilt under Vespasian . . . the scars of civil war can never be fully healed'.

² Bell (1997) 1–22; Millar (1998) 171–203.

granted and limited; indeed, this was one of the most important things a magistracy or priesthood provided. But beyond simply getting into or on these spaces, the elite also obtained, through competition, the right to build, restore or decorate them.³ In the transition from republic to principate, the rules of access to the major political and religious spaces of the city changed drastically, and the right to build was, after Augustus, almost entirely lost. However enthusiastically they tug on the Capitoline's foundation stone, the elite would not regain control of public, monumental space under Vespasian, or ever. Rather, their lack of control would become extravagantly visible under Domitian. This marks the emergence of a new kind of power, with its own spatial relations, ways of seeing and physical disposition.

This chapter will examine the relation between building under Domitian and the theme of imperial encroachment on the elite male body. While Domitian's building projects were many, only a few will be examined here: the Iovis Cenatio in the palace on the Palatine, the equestrian statue of Domitian in the Roman Forum and the Forum Transitorium. Two other constructions will be examined that may have existed only in senatorial imagination—Domitian's reflective *portico* and his all-black *triclinium*. Yet these few are enough to outline the relation between the emperor's control of space architecturally and his control of body-space, his ability to invade the supposedly impenetrable elite male body through surveillance and violence. This ability does not belong just to the 'bad' emperors, nor does it disappear when these emperors are rehabilitated in contemporary scholarship.

The opposition between Vespasian (good) and Domitian (bad), where good intentions are measured with an Augustan yardstick, remains the basis for most contemporary readings of Flavian Rome, whether or not they accept the *damnatio* of Domitian in the ancient historical tradition. The urge to condemn or rehabilitate Domitian has produced two scripts: (a) the kindly, down-to-earth Vespasian really was a much better emperor (more true to Augustus) than the cruel, arrogant and self-absorbed Domitian, or (b) behind the differences in personality, the Flavians pursued a common objective, the renewal of Rome's physical and moral fabric to create a second Augustan age. According to the first alternative, Domitian's Rome is the diary

³ Favro (1996) 54–78; Orlin (1997) 35–75; Stambaugh (1988) 16–47; Zanker (1988) 5–25.

of a progressive madness in stone.⁴ According to the second, it is a well-intentioned (or at least not totally perverse) elaboration of earlier imperial themes, sincerely trying to be Augustan even if it fails. The rehabilitation of Domitian has been under way at least since the articles by K. H. Waters in the mid-1960s and most interpretations of Domitian's reign are now of the second variety.⁵

Jas Elsner's reading of Nero as imperial builder makes an interesting comparison in this respect. For Elsner, the negative reading of Nero's buildings as bombastic monstrosities is largely the creation of the *damnatio* of Nero by elite writers after his death. The buildings themselves, examined objectively, are mostly practical responses to the wants and needs of Rome's population (the harbour at Ostia, the Macellum Magnum, the Baths of Nero, the Circus of Gaius and Nero). Even the Domus Aurea, despite its enormous scale and sumptuous ornament, is 'a natural and direct continuation of [the] Julio-Claudian tradition . . . in line with the general luxury of early imperial dining-rooms and villas'.⁶ The real problem, according to Elsner, is that Nero chose to combine the Domus Aurea with a rural villa complex right in middle of the city, thereby confusing and corrupting the nature of the urban space of Rome itself. The Palatine, Esquiline and Caelian were combined, and the heart of the city became—or at least was perceived as—Nero's 'private' house. Even this however, was in keeping with earlier imperial projects. Nero simply 'went one step further than his predecessors . . . as he had to do in what I have suggested was an incremental visual discourse of building by successive emperors in the city'.⁷ As a result, Elsner con-

⁴ For example, MacDonald's ([1982] 69) assessment of the palace on the Palatine as the product of Domitian's 'semi-orientalized, quixotic despotism'. Following the logic of these binary alternatives, Jones (1993) 96 responds: 'the judgement on the building program is tightly linked to the author's assessment of the emperor's character', and concludes, 'perhaps it is not only beauty that is in the eye of the beholder'.

⁵ D'Ambra (1993) 5: 'Although Domitian's incessant building answered the urgent need for urban renewal in the first decade of his reign, it also served as a policy of cultural renewal, that is, a program of moral and social reform attempting to revive traditional modes of behavior and to restrict other illicit acts, for example, by reenacting the Augustan marriage legislation with its strict measures against adultery'. Cf. Jones (1993) 79–98; Vinson (1989) 431–50; Waters (1963) 198–218; Waters (1964) 49–77.

⁶ Elsner (1994) 121.

⁷ Elsner (1994) 122.

cludes, 'Nero only became an outrageous and prodigal builder when he fell from power'.⁸

Similar claims have been made for Domitian, and according to this line of argument the ruler and his buildings only become monstrous *after* the history writers make them so.⁹ Their monstrosity is constructed not primarily by the buildings themselves, but as a rhetorical effect, as elite authors exploit the long-standing literary *topos* that excessive building is depraved in order to solidify the impression that this or that emperor was truly mad.¹⁰ Yet Nero's Domus Aurea or Domitian's House on the Palatine could never, in political terms, have been built by Augustus. By increments the principate had become something far different. If a considerable part of the power of images in the Augustan period lay in their ability to suggest a return to a golden age of *republican* institutions, that is decidedly not the case for images in the age of Nero or Domitian.¹¹ A more fundamental problem lies in reading the buildings entirely as images, as verbal or visual signs whose meanings can be constructed or deconstructed at will. The writers do not like the buildings because they did not like the emperor, rather than because of any physical, aesthetic or political messages intrinsic to the buildings themselves. This argument can be extended: elite Romans in the Julio-Claudian and Flavian periods liked or disliked what Rome had become architecturally and spatially on the basis of how they felt about other things a particular emperor (or emperors) did.

The transformation of Roman imperial buildings into text reflects the influence of post-modern views of contemporary cities as infinite tissues of signifiers whose meaning changes with the viewer's class, ethnicity and gender.¹² Indeed, meaning is not even fixed for any

⁸ Elsner (1994) 123.

⁹ D'Ambra (1993) 10: 'The Terror, again, is only a myth created afterwards by the Trajanic faction to condemn Domitian and to conceal the reality that Trajan continued Domitian's policies'. Cf. Vinson (1989) 449: 'Domitian's only real crime was to be the last Flavian'; Jones (1993) 160–3.

¹⁰ See Edwards (1993) 137–72 for the condemnation of luxurious building as a *topos* in Roman rhetoric.

¹¹ Favro (1996) 217–50; Zanker (1988) 101–66.

¹² E.g., Burgin (1996) 139–58; Butler (1993) 27–55; de Certeau (1984) 91–130; Donald (1995) 77–95; Foucault (1978) 293–308. For Rome itself, cf. Laurence (1997) 18: 'Further, we might conclude from the writing of Raban in *Soft City* that we cannot only characterize a city as a place of adversity. A city can liberate a person by its anonymity and opportunity, yet at the same time the seemingly ever-present threat of violence in the city can oppress a person. Urban living, whether

individual, at any moment. The deconstruction of the individual subject has been presented as one of the distinguishing achievements of *late capitalist* urban space and yet it has also begun to emerge as an achievement of the Roman city. Consequently one finds that one is damned if one does and damned if one doesn't.¹³ The argument that the meaning of Roman buildings was constructed and revised as if they were texts necessarily implies that a deconstruction of the individual like that found in the modern city was also a possibility within the architecture and space of ancient Rome. On the one hand, Foucault's periodisation of ancient, early modern and modern cultures would stipulate that no such deconstruction is possible. With the division between the politically, sexually active and the politically, sexually passive firmly in place throughout antiquity, we should not expect any substantial deconstruction of the active subject in urban space or anywhere else.¹⁴ On the other hand, the logic that led from structuralism to post-structuralism would suggest that the meaning of most things, including buildings, in any given human environment is textual, and therefore inherently unstable and deconstructible. The Romans are therefore free to construct, undo and reconstruct the meaning of this or that building as needed. Yet Romans in the early empire do not seem to have approached the space around and including their own bodies, which is, after all, what architecture has to deal with, as a free-form text. They also seem to have been aware that something had changed—that is, that their spatial position in the city, as defined by its buildings, was no longer entirely consonant with the active political and sexual role.¹⁵

ancient or modern, is full of contradictions'. For critique of the city and body as viewed through postmodernism, see Bordo (1993) 1–42, 277–300; Eagleton (1996) *passim*; Frank (1991) 36–102.

¹³ For the contradictions raised by using Foucault's view of ancient sexuality together with other contemporary theories like feminist psychoanalysis and film theory, see Fredrick (forthcoming a). For an argument that the nature of ancient Rome as a complex urban environment led to the development of 'sexuality' or a 'proto-sexuality', despite Foucault, see Habinek (1997) 23–43.

¹⁴ Foucault (1985) 38–93; Foucault (1986) 39–95. For summaries of ancient sexuality as articulated by active and passive roles (rather than hetero or homo object choices), see Clarke (1998) 7–55; Halperin, Winkler and Zeitlin (1990a) 3–20; Richlin (1997b) 16–35; Skinner (1996) 103–23; Skinner (1997) 3–25.

¹⁵ See Barton (1993) 11–46; Bartsch (1994) 36–62; and the chapters by Barton, Benton and Eldred in Fredrick (forthcoming b). As Tacitus notes of the trial of Gaius Silius under Tiberius, 'Therefore with much seriousness, as if Silius were being treated in accordance with the law, as if Varro were a real consul or that thing (*illud*) a republic, the senate was collected' (*Ann.* 4.19).

Hence the difficulty in approaching architecture in Flavian Rome as either the univocal expression of elite political activity or as pure text, presented to us in negative terms for reasons that have little to do with the buildings themselves, and much more with the rhetorical practice of *damnatio*.

The simplicity of the alternatives—the megalomania one finds in a given emperor's buildings is either entirely real or entirely textual—belies the fact that while the Flavians, especially Domitian, reshaped Rome as dramatically and thoroughly as Augustus, their city is hard to read.¹⁶ Temporally, Flavian Rome stands apart from the sense of promise and fulfilment, beginning and end, imparted by the connection of Aeneas and Troy to Augustus and the Julio-Claudian family. The buildings do not convey the sense of starting from point A, rude huts on the Palatine, and ending at point B, the Augustan Forum. Indeed, the absence of closure is a significant part of the problem. The major Flavian projects—the restoration of the Capitoline, the Flavian Amphitheatre, the Baths of Titus, the Forum Transitorium, the restoration of Pompey's theatre—are enormous reminders that time and history did not stop with Augustus.¹⁷ The city of marble rather than mud nonetheless remained fluid, mutable through catastrophic fires, civil wars or imperial whim, and each rebuilding lies further away from the sense of closure provided by an intelligible relation to the past.

Aesthetically, a similar problem arises. It is no longer a question of transforming bricks into marble, but a question of multiplication and limit. Domitian's palace submerged the Palatine; his equestrian statue towered like a mountain over the Forum; he erected so many triumphal arches throughout the city that a graffito remarked, in a terrible Greek pun, 'arkei', 'that's enough'. Or, perhaps, these buildings became problematically big only when *damnatio* (or panegyric) made them so. The historical and aesthetic problems reinforce one another: in the absence of any conviction that Rome's republican past leads inevitably to a fated Domitian present, the question arises

¹⁶ For complete lists of the structures built or restored by Domitian, see Blake (1959) 99–124; Jones (1993) 82–94.

¹⁷ As Favro (1996) 248 notes, 'Once Rome entered this realm, once the contrasts became commonalities, once grand marble buildings became familiar, the clarity of the Augustan urban image began to fade. The process was accelerated by the death of the man who directed and focussed the urban image. Despite his efforts, Augustus could not prevent the urban image of Rome from evolving'.

of what is expressed by the unprecedented scale of Flavian architecture. Individually, Flavian buildings more typically overwhelm and erase, rather than preserve, the *genius loci*, the inherited set of meanings and associations of a given place. Collectively, they question the entire relation of urban space in imperial Rome to its republican past.¹⁸ Without accepting the condemnation in the historical tradition at face value, we should still explore how such buildings might have been experienced kinaesthetically, rather than purely textually. How did they shape the gaze and bodies of their users in ways different from the Rome of Cicero or Augustus?

In order to pursue these questions it is necessary to dig out the Flavian city hidden beneath the welter of scholarship on Augustan Rome. This scholarship is driven partly by the aura of good government associated with Augustus, and partly by the concept of a Roman political or cultural revolution beginning with the Gracchi and ending with Augustus. As Diane Favro points out, 'the attraction of Augustan Rome lies both with the number and quality of urban projects and with the perceived beneficent absolutism of Augustus himself'.¹⁹ Since the number of urban projects under the Flavians is hardly less, the absence of attraction therefore arises from the perceived lack of either quality in execution or beneficence in motivation, or both. The appeal of the Augustan city also lies in the notion that one is investigating a cultural revolution in progress, witnessing 'a fundamental relocation and redefinition of authority in Roman society'.²⁰ By the time of Domitian, despite the newness of the building projects in scale and design, and despite the fact that the Flavians came to power after another civil war, the revolution seems to be over. As Elsner puts it for architecture:²¹

By being toppled, Nero did more than end the Julio-Claudian dynasty. He ended also the radical nature of early imperial experimentation with the city of Rome. The *Domus Aurea* became the ultimate, notorious, stage in the Julio-Claudian pattern of luxurious encroachment onto the rest of the city, begun as early as the extensions of Augustus' house on the Palatine into a palace under Tiberius.

¹⁸ For the importance of Rome's topography in creating a Roman sense of self, see Edwards (1996) 27–43.

¹⁹ Favro (1996) 19.

²⁰ Wallace-Hadrill (1997) 7.

²¹ Elsner (1994) 124.

The stress placed by Elsner and Favro on the Julio-Claudian city is matched by Wallace-Hadrill's location of *the* Roman cultural revolution during the age of Augustus. Cultural authority had, a century before Domitian, passed from the hands of elite families to academic specialists in law and religion patronised by the imperial house, and thereby become less local, more universal and more rational. By the end of the Augustan period a new order had emerged, one that, like the republican system before it, made sense of the world. The interest of the Augustan city lies in watching this new order take shape, and, for Elsner, the interest of the Neronian city lies in watching it reach its Julio-Claudian climax.

Domitian's Rome fades by comparison—neither beneficent nor revolutionary. Or perhaps it is just as revolutionary when imperial cultural authority, post-Augustan and universal, writes itself on the scale of Domitian's palace or the Flavian Amphitheatre while at the same time restoring monuments like Augustus' sundial as a model for what it is doing.²² Flavian buildings, like Neronian ones, do not adhere to the compositional forms and spatial limits—to the outward spirit of restraint and compromise—practised by Augustus. This is partly because the role of the *princeps* had changed, in power and nature. Republican institutions had become less relevant, and the *princeps* far more distanced from his erstwhile equals, the *patres conscripti*. On the other hand, neither republican institutions nor elite men had become completely irrelevant. In fact, they had been and remained intrinsic to most public forms of Roman architecture: as Vespasian's refoundation of the Capitoline shows, a Roman temple presupposes *pontifices* and *augures*; a forum or basilica presupposes law courts and magistrates. Yet the development of the principate into empire demands the slow refocusing of the power of the state, the *res publica*, from outside to inside, from public spaces, the *comitia* and Curia, to 'private' spaces, the household or 'court' of the emperor. However beneficently exercised, this must affect how power is generated in Roman thought and experience, and therefore the integration of the subject within 'his' urban environment.²³

²² See D'Ambra (1993) 29; Richardson (1992) 190–1.

²³ This is somewhat different from the claim sometimes made (e.g., in Gleason [1995] xvii–xxix, 56–81; Gleason [1999] 67–84; Skinner [1993] 107–30) that masculinity in the ancient world or even ancient Rome was 'radically underdetermined', because this claim is not open to historical change: it is as true for the masculinity

If political power and religious authority in republican Rome are gendered masculine, this depends on the limitation of any one man's power by his competitors—or, to put it another way, its definition by those old, parochial, republican institutions.²⁴ The removal of these limits may allow the *princeps* to link his authority with forms of knowledge at once broader and more specialised. At the same time, it must also expose that authority to equation not with rationality, but with the orient and eastern effeminacy. Hence Augustus' drive to retain the fiction of equals. It was no longer possible for the Flavians to return, in any convincing way, to this fiction, and it is implausible to assume that this was either the intent or effect of their architecture.

Another way of approaching these issues is to begin from the assumption that in order for imperial power to exist, it needs a space in which to exist. This space is defined not just through architectural novelties like Nero's Domus Aurea or Domitian's palace, but in the reshaping of personal space—'the social contours of the body'—and of the inward space of consciousness. The measured, deliberate and dignified *habitus* of the republican senator was the product of careful rhetorical training, of the toga which restricted and stylised his movement, of the clients which surrounded him and screened his body from unwanted physical contact, and of the laws which punished attacks on his person or property while exempting him from physical punishments himself.²⁵ The existence of the emperor breached this space, establishing the constant possibility of another, superior in power, invading the space around one's body.²⁶ Where others could not go, the emperor had to be able to go if he was not to remain merely one elite man among many. So, too, in the mind itself. It would not have occurred to Scipio Aemilianus or Cicero that they might lose their property, be physically tortured,

of Hellenistic Alexandria, classical Athens or Plautus' Rome as it is for Domitian's Rome; cf. P. A. Miller's argument ([1998] 171–203) that Foucault's approach to ancient sexuality does not recognise or explain historical change within it.

²⁴ For the close association of priesthoods with political power, see Beard (1990) 17–48; Potter (1999b) 113–67; Zanker (1988) 114–35.

²⁵ See Corbeill (forthcoming); Stone (1994) 13–45; Walters (1997) 29–43; Zanker (1988) 162–6.

²⁶ As Richlin (1999) 203 notes, 'The implication of Cicero's decapitation is here realized in the ability of the *princeps* to close off speech as he controls the bodies of his subjects'.

and possibly executed by their political rivals *except* in the context of suspended institutions and civil war. Imperial power had to carve this possibility into the bodies and minds of the elite, and out of the space around them, permanently and institutionally, in order to exist.

As Flavian Rome constructs urban space for and through the emperor, it also constructs a home for imperial power inside the social contours of the elite body, and inside individual elite minds. In this regard it not correct to treat, as Foucault does, the classical architecture of display and spectacle as completely distinct from the modern practice of surveillance.²⁷ Foucault concedes that the new emphasis on sexual austerity in the imperial period might be tied to 'certain efforts on the part of political power to raise moral standards in a more or less authoritarian way',²⁸ but he concludes that such efforts were too haphazard and sporadic to have had much effect. This may be true if one's goal is to explain the emergence of austerity as a philosophical theme, but it overlooks the possibility that Augustus' marital legislation, and the renewed attempts at enforcement under Domitian, were not primarily intended to raise moral standards but were, instead, part of a larger strategy of imperial surveillance of the elite. The emperor's unique position as the patron of major building projects in Rome is part of the same power that enables him to manipulate knights and senators through marital legislation and terrorise them through the use of informers and treason trials. Foucault is correct, however, in emphasising in *Discipline and Punish* that surveillance is a spatial practice: power constructs a space into which it can look, while those inside know that they might be watched at any time, without knowing if or when they actually are.

Consultant quos memorauī, quonam modo ea plurium auditu acciperentur: nam loco, in quem coibatur, seruanda solitudinis facies; et si pone foris adsisterent, metus uisus, sonitus aut forte ortae suspicionis erat. tectum inter et laquearia tres senatores haud minus turpi latebra quam detestanda fraude sese abstrudunt, foraminibus et rimis aurem admoueat.

(Tacitus, *Annales* 4.69)

²⁷ 'Antiquity had been a society of spectacle. "To render accessible to a multitude of men the inspection of a small number of objects": this was the problem to which the architecture of temples, theaters, and circuses responded. . . . The modern age poses the opposite problem: "To procure for a small number, or even for a single individual, the instantaneous view of a great multitude."' (Foucault [1979] 216)

²⁸ Foucault (1986) 40.

The men that I have named considered how many might share this evidence. The appearance of privacy had to be preserved for their meeting place, and if they stood behind the door, there was fear of being seen, heard or detected even on a chance suspicion. So between the roof and the suspended ceiling three senators hid themselves away, their hiding place hardly less foul than their deception was abominable, and they stuck their ears to the holes and cracks.

This episode of three senators spying on the conversation of a knight and senator, in the senator's house, may be dramatised, exaggerated or even invented by Tacitus. Its architecture of surveillance, however, is not the creation of *damnatio*, and it did not exist before the principate. Not that rival republican factions did not spy on each other, but now there was one who might spy on them all. This possibility demanded that new spaces be created, conceptually and architecturally, in Rome—a new space from which the emperor could look, and a new space for him to look into. Through the ears and eyes of senators, the emperor—here, Tiberius—peeks voyeuristically into the 'private' sentiments of an elite Roman, and finds him guilty. The knight, Sabinus, is accused in a letter from Tiberius to the senate, condemned, and promptly led away to the prison to be strangled. As Sabinus is led through the street, the crowd runs away from his presence, and then runs back, afraid of having been seen to be afraid.

It is not simply that there are two disjunct themes in Roman rhetoric, 'large-scale building is often morally bad', and 'tyrants spy on people', and that elite writers employed these themes as needed to attack emperors they did not like. The two themes are crucially linked by the concept of spatial integrity, on the one hand of the city as a public body controlled, collectively, by elite men, and on the other of the elite man's body and his property.²⁹ Imperial power depended on a permanent invasion, aptly described by Lucan as an endless civil war, of the 'private' lives and bodies of the elite. In our accounts of Domitian, the practice of imperial surveillance has crystallised into two sharply contrasted architectural parables.

²⁹ On the city of Rome conceived as a human body, see Gowers (1995) 23–32; for a recent summary of the importance of the integrity of body and property to the self-conception of the elite male, see Joshel and Murnaghan (1998a) 1 21.

Tempore uero suspecti periculi appropinquante sollicitior in dies porticum, in quibus spatium consuere, parietes phengite lapide distinxit, e cuius splendore per imagines quidquid a tergo fieret prouideret.

(Suetonius, *Domitianus* 14.4)

He became more anxious day by day as the time of the danger he suspected grew near. So he put a facade of phengite stone on the walls of the portico where he usually walked, so that he could see in advance, from reflections in its polished surface, whatever might happen behind him.

The ability, and desire, of the emperor to multiply his gaze across a series of polished surfaces, so that in this one *portico* at least *nothing* escapes his eyes, exemplifies an entire approach to urban space, especially as it impacted the elite. It is a paradigm for the city of Rome itself, as a network of holes, cracks or mirrors through which the speech and thoughts of knights and senators were constantly at risk of being exposed. As Tacitus remarks,

Quod maxime exitiabile tulere illa tempora, cum primores senatus infimas etiam delationes exercerent, alii propalam, multi per occultum; neque discerneres alienos a coniunctis, amicos ab ignotis, quid repens aut uetustate obscurum; perinde in foro, in conuiuio, quaque de re locuti incusabantur, ut quis praeuenire et reum destinare properat, pars ad subsidium sui, plures infecti quasi uoletudine et contactu.

(Tacitus, *Annales* 6.7)

The most destructive thing those times produced was the fact that the leaders of the senate pursued the worst kind of accusations, some openly, but most in secret. Nor in this respect could you separate strangers from your own relatives, friends from people you didn't know, or a recent event from ancient history. People who said anything on any subject, in the Forum or at a dinner-party, thus found themselves accused, as someone hastened to beat the crowd and make the charge first—some as a means of self-defence, but most infected with a kind of disease or contagion.

For the emperor to be in the light and in the know, an unaccustomed darkness is required of the elite. The intentions of power must be shrouded from their gaze, and their ignorance must be enforced. This necessity is captured in Domitian's macabre dinner party, whose complementary relation to the *portico* of phengite described in Suetonius is unmistakable:

... αὐθις δὲ τοὺς πρώτους τῆς γερουσίας καὶ τῶν ἱππέων τόνδε τὸν τρόπον. οἶκον μελάντατον ἀπανταχόθεν ἐκ τε τῆς ὀροφῆς καὶ ἐκ τῶν τοίχων τοῦ

τ' ἐδάφους παρασκευάσας, καὶ κλισίας ἐπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ δαπέδου γυμνάς ὁμοίας ἐτοιμάσας, ἐσεκάλεσεν αὐτοὺς μόνους νυκτὸς ἄνευ τῶν ἀκολούθων. καὶ πρῶτον μὲν στήλην ταφειδῇ ἐκάστω σφῶν παρέστηκεν, τό τε ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἔχουσαν καὶ λυχνόυχον μικρόν, οἷος ἐν τοῖς μνημείοις κρεμάννυται· ἔπειτα παῖδες εὐπρεπεῖς γυμνοί, μέλανι καὶ αὐτοὶ κεχρισμένοι, ἐσήλθον ὥσπερ εἴδωλα, καὶ περιελθόντες αὐτοὺς μετ' ὀρχήσεώς τινος φοβεράς πρὸ ποδῶν ιδρύθησαν· καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο πάνθ' ὅσα περ ἐν τοῖς ἐναγίσμασι καθαγίζεται, καὶ ἐκείνοις μέλανα ἐν σκεύεσιν ὁμοίοις προσηνέχθη, ὥστε καὶ φοβεῖσθαι καὶ τρέμειν καθ' ἕκαστον αὐτῶν πάντας, αἰεὶ τε ὅσον οὐκ ἤδη σφαγῆσθαι προσδέχεσθαι, ἄλλως τε καὶ ὅτι παρὰ τε τῶν ἄλλων σιωπῇ πολλῇ ὥσπερ ἐν τεθνηκόσιν ἤδη ἦν, καὶ αὐτὸς Δομιτιανὸς πάντα ἔς τε θανάτους καὶ ἐς σφαγὰς φέροντα διελάλει. τέλος δὲ ἀφῆκε μὲν αὐτούς, προαπαλλάξας δὲ δὴ τοὺς οἰκέτας σφῶν τοὺς ἐν τοῖς προθύροις ἐστηκότας, δι' ἐτέρων τινῶν ἀγνώστων τοὺς μὲν ὀχήμασι τοὺς δὲ φορείοις παραδοὺς πολὺ πλεόν δεός αὐτοῖς ἐνέβαλε. ἄρτι δὲ ἕκαστός σφω οἶκαδε ἐσεληλύθει καὶ τρόπον τινὰ ἀναπνεῖν ἤρχετο, καὶ αὐτῷ ἐσηγγέλθη ὅτι παρὰ τοῦ Αὐγούστου τις ἦκοι. προσδοκῶντων τε ἐκ τούτου τότε δὴ πάντως ἀπολεῖσθαι, ἐσεκόμεσέ τις τὴν στήλην ἀργυρᾶν οὖσαν, εἴτ' ἄλλος ἄλλο τι καὶ ἕτερος ἕτερον τῶν σκευῶν τῶν ἐν τῷ δείπνῳ παρατεθέντων, πολυτελεστάτου τινὸς γένους πεποιημένα· καὶ τέλος ὁ παῖς ἐκεῖνος, τὸ δαιμόνιον ἐκάστω, λελουμένος τε καὶ κεκοσμημένος [ἐσήλθε]. καὶ οὕτω διὰ πάσης τῆς νυκτὸς φοβούμενοι τὰ δῶρα ἔλαβον.

(Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 67.9.1–5)

... at a different time, he gave the leading senators and knights a feast of the following kind. Preparing a room that was absolutely black on all sides, from the ceiling to the walls and floor, and setting up on the naked floor equally bare couches, he invited in the guests alone, at night, with no attendants. First, he set up markers shaped like tombstones beside each one, having the name of the person and a little lampholder like those that are hung in tombs. Then attractive naked boys, themselves painted black, entered like ghosts, encircled the guests in a terrifying dance, and took up seats at their feet. After this, the things which are customarily offered to the dead, black and in black dishes, were placed before them, so that they all began to shake and tremble in fear, each one expecting to have his throat cut any moment. This feeling intensified as they stayed just as quiet as if they were already among the dead, while Domitian chatted on amiably about topics related to murder and slaughter. Finally he sent them away, removing the slaves waiting at the door and putting other, unfamiliar coachmen and footmen in their place, so that they were filled with even more fear. Each had barely returned home and begun to catch his breath when the message came that someone was there from the Augustus. While they were waiting, fully and finally expecting to die, one fellow brought in the marker, which was actually made of silver, and others the rest of the paraphernalia used in the dinner, all of which turned out to be expensively made. Finally the very boy who had

seemed to be the death-spirit for each [came in], washed and adorned. And so after an entire night of terror they received these gifts.

This episode divides elite men from the emperor along a stark series of opposites: dark/light, ignorance/knowledge, terror/ease, silent/speaking, dead/living, body/mind. Issues of gender and sexual penetrability cannot be kept out of this set of oppositions. Indeed, though a finger is never laid on his guests, Domitian's black *triclinium* is an apparatus of torture with the elite guests clearly cast in the penetrated role. The social contours around them are methodically broken down. First, by coming alone they are isolated from additional guests they might ordinarily bring. Secondly, because the black walls and floor provide no status clues, the hierarchical relations that govern dining-room behaviour are largely erased—or replaced by the single distinction between emperor and other. Finally, each guest is separated from his own slaves, and left to anticipate that the unknown slaves carrying him home may kill him. These unknown slaves also become witnesses to the ongoing terror of the guests, which they can report later to their imperial owner. The guests are thus rendered socially naked, if not physically so.

As often happens in modern torture, in this anti-*triclinium* familiar physical comforts are twisted into sources of discomfort and intense fear: the dining 'couch' becomes a plain board, the seating positions are marked by funereal tablets, the cups and plates offer food fit only for the dead. Attractive, nude slave boys are offered to the guests and perform for them, seeming to confirm their status as penetrators. Yet the boys are painted black, and their performance terrifies each diner with the image of his own death-spirit. Rather than looking forward to sex, each begins more intently to fear the knife at his own throat. As Elaine Scarry emphasises, the point of this practice in torture is to turn the body against itself: to desire the slave boy, or to hunger for the wine or food, is to 'want' death.³⁰ The ideological yield of torture, its message of power, consists in its ability to wring uncontrollable responses from the prisoner's body—jerks, screams and cries. In this case, Domitian elicits uncontrollable trembling from his guests, over a period of perhaps six to eight hours.

³⁰ Scarry (1985) 27–59. For the representation of pain in pre-modern Western culture, see Cohen (2000) 36–68.

This is particularly humiliating because control of the emotions and the body was such a desideratum for Roman elite men.

Much as we might like to, we cannot rehabilitate every Roman emperor from Tiberius through Trajan in order to claim that this kind of terror was strictly the rhetorical creation of hostile elite writers after the fact, that each emperor only spied on, prosecuted or punished the elite from the graveyard of *damnatio*. To claim that neither Tiberius nor Domitian were the sexual monsters elite gossip made them out to be is one thing; it is something else to claim that the principate did not come to rely, over time and systematically, upon surveillance and terror as crucial techniques of power. Domitian usurps the entire physical environment of his guests in a way that would not have been thinkable between one elite man and another in the republic, or between the *princeps* and elite men in the Augustan period. He uses the most essential of elite domestic rituals, the dinner party, to do it. Moreover, he retains the fiction of generous patronage by giving them all expensive gifts in the end. But precisely because they now appear valuable and desirable, the black accoutrements of the party remain instruments of psychological torture, since to accept them and (worse) to want them, the guests must reenact their powerlessness, terror and humiliation.

Whether or not Domitian 'really' built such a *portico* or hosted such a dinner party, the fact is that over the succession of emperors from Augustus through Domitian a polarised model of spatial relations emerged. On the one hand, an emperor who attempts to see everything through a labyrinth of peepholes and mirrors; on the other, senators and knights isolated and feminised in the dark before his gaze, but always, in their secret conversations or private thoughts, resisting—or at least liable of being accused of resisting. To the extent that the Augustan city successfully disguises the relation between its public architecture and the imperial practice of surveillance, then the Roman cultural revolution is not complete and the republican body is allowed to persist, at least as a fiction. To the extent that the enormous encroachment of Flavian building on the space of the city reflects the encroachment of imperial surveillance into the social and emotional space of the elite, a different way of seeing and being has come into existence, which affects both the scale and plan of major Flavian constructions, and their smaller details.

It was the overwhelming good fortune of the poet Statius, in mid-90s CE, to be invited to dine in the Iovis Cenatio of Domitian's Palatine

palace. Located on the upper level of this enormous complex, the dining hall was nearly one hundred feet long and, even more impressive, nearly one hundred feet high, its ceiling, flat or vaulted, supported by three levels of columns (fig. 40).³¹ The rear wall of the dining hall was curved into an apse, where a piece of the polychrome marble pavement is preserved; the walls were panelled with marble. There were three windows in each side wall, flanked by oval fountains surrounded by columns. As Bek points out, the purpose of the windows and fountains was not so much to provide a pleasing view out, but to let light in: 'through them . . . the hall was suffused with doublesided diffuse light intensified through the reflecting marbles of columns, walls and floor'.³² Statius was impressed.

Tectum augustum, ingens, non centum insigne columnis
sed quantae superos caelumque Atlante remisso
sustentare queant. stupet hoc vicina Tonantis
regia teque pari laetantur sede locatum
numina (nec magnum properes escendere caelum):
tanta patet moles effusaeque impetus aulae
liberior campi multumque amplexus operti
aetheros et tantum domino minor: ille penatis
implet et ingenti genio gravat. aemulus illic
mons Libys Iliacusque nitet, simul atra Syene
et Chios et glaucae certantia Doridi saxa,
Lunaque portandis tantum suffecta columnis.
longa supra species: fessis vix culmina prenda
visibus auratique putes laquearia caeli.

(Statius, *Silvae* 4.2.18–31)

A huge and august building, distinguished not with
a hundred columns, but with as many as could support
the gods and heaven, giving Atlas a rest. The nearby palace
of Jupiter is stunned, and the gods delighted that you have
a home just like theirs—but don't rush to mount heaven
just yet—such a mass extends, the hall sweeps on like
an open plain, embracing so much bounded sky and yet
somehow less than its master. He fills up every nook,
the house made heavy with his massive soul. There
the jealous mountains gleam, Libya contending with rival

³¹ For descriptions of Domitian's palace and the *cenatio Iouis*, see Bek (1983) 90–1; Blake (1959) 120; Platner and Ashby (1929) 158–66; Richardson (1992) 114–17; *LTUR* 4.30–1.

³² Bek (1983) 91.

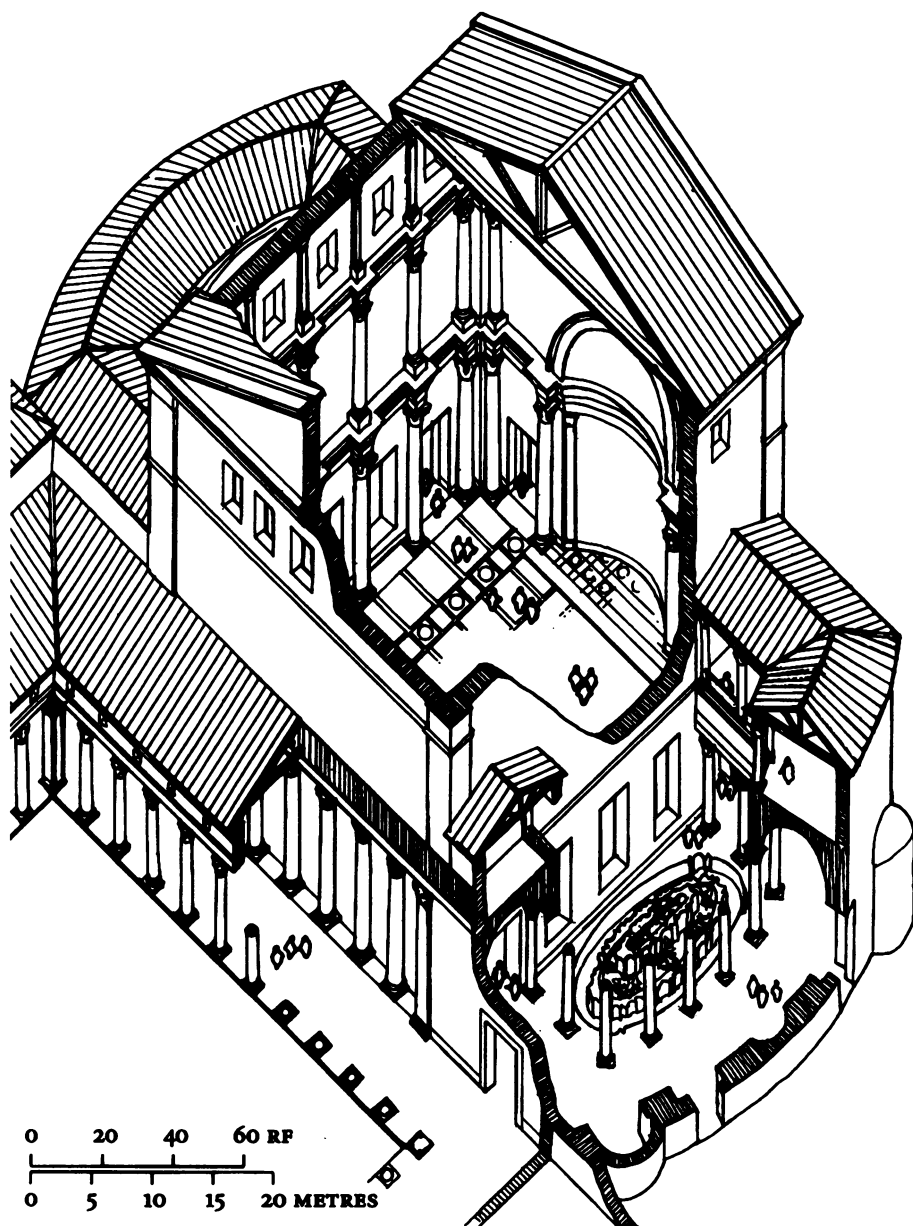


Fig. 40. Palace of Domitian, Iovis Cenatio. By kind permission of Sheila Gibson.

Troy, and black Syene, and Chios, and stones that vie with the glassy sea. Luna is content to put her candid shoulder to the columns. If you look up, it's a long, long way—you would hardly grasp the summit with your exhausted gaze, and think you saw the panelled roof of golden heaven.

This passage presents a standard rhetorical trope in literary accounts of Flavian architecture: the building is vast, the space enclosed is huge, but the emperor himself is greater still.³³ However much earth and sky they occupy, the buildings draw a line in the sand which the emperor must always pass beyond. Statius suggests the problematic nature of this in line 18 by evoking Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.170, *tecum augustum, ingens, centum sublime columnis* ('an august building, huge, uplifted with a hundred columns'), used to describe the palace of Latinus.³⁴ Domitian's dining hall overwhelms Latinus' primeval home, and yet the fact that Statius cannot make the same claim poetically—to have overwhelmed Virgil—points to the architectural hubris. This allusion, then, plays dangerously with the nostalgia for the old Rome of moral and architectural simplicity.

Meanwhile, the building is so immense that beyond it only heaven lies, and yet the emperor has not left the building. Indeed, it is only the fact that the emperor is still alive that separates the Iovis Cenatio from heaven. And so his presence is everywhere. Statius' vocabulary here is sexually suggestive: *impetus* ('thrust'), *amplexus* ('embrace'), *PENatis* ('household gods', with a pun on *penis*), *inGENti* ('huge', with a pun on *gignere, genui*, 'to beget', 'I begot'), *genio* ('tutelar deity' or 'inborn talent', with the same pun), *grauat* ('make heavy', 'impregnate'). The dining hall may have forward thrust and it may embrace, but the emperor fills it up and makes it pregnant with his enormous *genius*. The guests, meanwhile, would be exhausted by the attempt even to reach its golden summit with their eyes. The emperor not only transcends the architectural space, he possesses it, penetrates it, makes it his, and the space struggles to meet the challenge.

When Caesar has ordered his thousands of purple-striped guests to recline, *ipsa sinus accincta Ceres Bacchusque laborat/sufficere* ('Ceres

³³ As Martial concludes of Domitian's palace (*Epigrams* 8.36.11–12), 'This house, Augustus, which strikes the stars with its summit, is equal to heaven but still less than its master' (*haec, Auguste, tamen, quae uertice sidera pulsat, / par domus est caelo sed minor est domino*).

³⁴ Coleman (1988) 89.

herself, with her skirt hiked up, and Bacchus labour to provide', 34–5). As Coleman notes, this phrasing recalls Juno's inability to provide strength to Turnus when he is trapped inside the Trojan fort in *Aeneid* 9.802–3, *nec contra uiris audet Saturnia Iuno/sufficere*, because she has already received a threatening message from Jupiter via Iris.³⁵ This delicate allusion underscores the equation between Domitian and Jupiter, with the implicit question, 'does this Jupiter control his Juno and his heaven—the hall itself—like Jupiter himself?'

This is an awkward situation for the guests. The emperor's presence in and possession of the space visually is indicated by the apse at the rear wall, the focus of the entire room. As Bek points out, the arrangement of Domitian's dining hall used familiar elements to reorient fundamentally the gaze in Roman *triclinia*.³⁶

Typologically [Domitian's] triclinium is still reminiscent of the private ones for its interdependence of the peristyle and the survival of garden surroundings in the nymphaea. But the apse as a backdrop, not for sculptures or fountains, but for persons or events, is a novel feature. Through this innovation not only the architecture of the triclinium has been changed, but also the character of the activities taking place there seems altered. Instead of being an entertainment of the participants, the convivium has become a performance to be staged. The display of social interrelation has become an official show or state ceremony.

Statius confirms this by declaring that, despite the huge space, the various marbles, the citrus wood, ivory and slaves arranged in ranks, he has leisure to gaze only at *ipsum, ipsum*, 'tranquil in expression, softening his beams with serene majesty, and lowering modestly the standards of his fortune' (*ipsum, ipsum cupido tantum spectare uacauit/tranquillum uultus et maiestate serena/mulcentem radios summittentemque modestae fortunae uexilla suae*, *Silv.* 4.2.38–43).

Rather than sharing a hierarchically structured view out of the *triclinium*, in Domitian's Iouis Cenatio the guests are subordinated to a view with the emperor at its apex.³⁷ As it displays the majesty and authority of the emperor, this reorientation also subjects the guests to a supervisory gaze, not just that of the emperor before them, but one arising from the very awareness that their behaviour has become

³⁵ Coleman (1988) 93.

³⁶ Bek (1983) 91.

³⁷ For the reorganisation of Rome's visual hierarchy, with the emperor rather than elite men at its apex, see Barton (forthcoming); Benton (forthcoming).

‘a performance to be staged’. As the emperor penetrates and fills up *the* space of the hall around the guests, he also penetrates *their* space, or, to put it another way, as he transcends the limits of the architecture toward heaven, he also remains immanent in it, encroaching upon the limits around each diner. Seeing the ruler of lands and parent of the conquered world, the hope of mankind and care of the gods, Statius wonders if it can be religiously correct not to rise in deference (*et non assurgere fas est?*, ‘and is it proper not to rise up?’, *Silv.* 4.2.17). Whether the flattery is sincere or not, it reveals the expectation that on other occasions, the elite man was expected to rise before the emperor’s presence, like the lesser gods before Jupiter. Allowing them to recline, Domitian underscores the fact that he can compel them to stand. Their enforced conviviality therefore becomes subject to a kind of infinite surveillance, since to appear too equal could be construed as criticism, while to appear openly servile would destroy the illusion—also another form of criticism. As the emperor expands to fill the enormous space that frames him, the latitude of safe behaviour afforded each guest shrinks.

The position of the emperor in the apse of the Iovis Cenatio, at the apex of a visual triangle that frames him for an exterior view, is also a position of surveillance from which to gaze down at his elite guests, as if he were everywhere in the space at once, and yet still firmly localised and centralised within it. Domitian’s building program reproduces and intensifies this effect throughout the city. A huge equestrian statue of the emperor was erected in the Forum, the public centre of the city, and Statius wonders, *quae superimposito moles geminata colosso/stat Latium complexa forum?* (‘What mass, redoubled by the colossus placed above it, stands embracing the Latin Forum?’, *Stat. Silv.* 1.1.1–2). The language again suggests expansion without limit, a huge mass doubled by a huge mass, and the statue seems to enclose the space that surrounds it. Indeed, ‘the very guardian of the spot’ (*ipse loci custos*), Curtius is first ‘terrified’ (*expauit*) by the new construction, but then graciously accepts that only now is his lake truly happy and holy, and that his own deed shrinks by comparison with Domitian’s victories in civil war and against the Germans. Even the equestrian statue of Iulius Caesar in its forum must also give away beneath this new marvel: *uix lumine fesso/explores, quam longus in hunc despectus ab illo* (‘Scarcely with an exhausted eye could you test how great is the gaze downward toward this one [Iulius] from that [Domitian]’, *Silv.* 1.1.87–8).

The repetition of the conceit of the eye exhausted as it seeks the limit of Domitianic construction is significant (cf. *Silv.* 4.2.30–1: *longa supra species: fessis uix culmina prendas/uisibus auratique putes laquearia caeli*, ‘If you look up, it’s a long, long way—you would hardly grasp the summit with your exhausted gaze and think you saw the panelled roof of golden heaven.’). With the switch to the second person in both instances, Statius situates the feeling of exhaustion in the eye of his reader, whose most powerful sense, the sense that extends the furthest away from his own body, is still barely adequate to take in the limits of the architecture.³⁸ This makes a pointed contrast with the inexhaustible eye of the emperor. Were you—the reader—seated where Domitian is, your eye could scarcely see the ground. Not so the imperial eye. From atop the giant horse, you—now referring to Domitian—are seen to survey the construction of the *Palatia*, and ‘whether the Trojan fire stays awake with its silent torch, and Vesta approves now her tested ministrants’ (*an tacita uigilet face Troicus ignis/atque exploratas iam laudet Vesta ministras*, *Silv.* 1.1.35–6). The gaze of the emperor penetrates into the very shrine of Vesta, the archetype of forbidden interior space in Roman society. The corrective gaze of the statue alludes to Domitian’s own surveillance of the behaviour of the Vestal Virgins, and the elite men with whom they were linked.

mox Corneliam maximam virginem absolutam olim, dein longo intervallo repetitam atque convictam defodi imperavit stupratoresque virgis in Comitio ad necem caedi, excepto praetorio viro, cui, dubia etiam tum causa et incertis quaestionibus atque tormentis de semet professo, exsilium indulsit.

(Suetonius, *Domitianus* 8.4–5)

Soon the chief vestal Cornelia, who had been absolved once but then recharged and convicted a long time after, he ordered buried alive. He also commanded her lovers to be beaten to death with rods in the Comitium, with one ex-praetor excepted, whom he indulged with exile after he confessed his guilt while the investigation and torture of the slaves were still in doubt.

By alluding to his notorious improvement of the behaviour of the Vestals, Statius alludes to Domitian’s widespread policy of ‘moral’ censorship—the renewed enforcement of the *Lex Scantinia* and Augustus’

³⁸ For vision as the most powerful sense, see Varro *Ling.* 6.80, who connects *uideo* (‘I see’) specifically with *uis* (‘force’, ‘violence’); Fredrick (forthcoming a).

marital legislation, and his edict against the castration of boys. As Martial observes, the renewal of the legislation did not necessarily result in less adultery:

Julia lex populis ex quo, Faustine, renata est
 atque intrare domos iussa Pudicitia est,
 aut minus aut certe non plus tricesima lux est,
 et nubit decimo iam Telesilla viro.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 6.7.1–4)

Since the Julian law was renewed for the people,
 Faustinus, and Chastity ordered to enter our homes,
 it has been less, or certainly not more, than three hundred days,
 and Telesilla is already 'married' to her tenth husband.

The wording of the poem suggests that what entered elite households as the result of Domitian's moral campaign was not *Pudicitia*, but the act of command. By reclaiming for the emperor the supervision of elite sexual behaviour, Domitian reclaimed a powerful pretext—in addition to treason—on which to prosecute the elite.³⁹ He seems to have relied heavily on informers. Jones remarks, 'senators had reason to dislike Domitian: for one thing, he accentuated, though he did not initiate, their loss of real power'.⁴⁰ He also stressed this loss of power by accentuating the practice of imperial surveillance, penetrating the traditional boundaries around their bodies, their households and their conversations. Hence Vinson stresses the 'fundamental similarity between sexual and political activity', and concludes, '... Domitian's punishment of the Vestals ... represents but one side of the coin which on its reverse displays his political repression of the Roman elite'.⁴¹ As the opening epigraph from Martial shows, whether it is fawning praise or *damnatio*, the emperor's architectural expansion outward to dominate the public space of the city was linked in elite thinking to his expansion inward, into the 'private' space of sexual behaviour.

The multiplication of buildings throughout the city announced the ubiquitous presence of the emperor. Like Curtius and the deified

³⁹ Vinson (1989) 432: 'As was the case when these laws were originally enacted, so too during their Domitianic revival resentment ran high among the elite over the infringement of their individual *libertas* ...'.

⁴⁰ Jones (1993) 169.

⁴¹ Vinson (1989) 447.

Iulius, elite men must give way spatially to accommodate this, and each is liable, at any moment, to be accused of having an inner space where he hides his secret thoughts, and—always—perhaps even plots, about the emperor. At the same time, no elite man is immune to the charge of sexual misbehaviour, whether or not the charge is false. Foucault is right: this is not the beginning of an epoch-making movement toward the isolation, regulation and moral problematisation of sexuality. It is, however, part of a comprehensive attempt to establish imperial space around and within the supposedly impenetrable bodies of elite men.

Like his buildings and his informers, images of the emperor multiplied: 'so many honors of this kind were voted to him that very nearly all of the world under his rule was filled with his likenesses and statues made of silver and gold' (καὶ τοσαῦτα αὐτῷ ἐψηφίσθη ὥστε πᾶσαν ὀλίγου δεῖν τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν ὑπ' αὐτὸν οὔσαν εἰκόνων αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνδριάντων καὶ ἀργυρῶν καὶ χρυσῶν ἐμπλησθῆναι, Cass. Dio 67.8.1). In the city of Rome itself, it became difficult to get from one place to another without passing under 'him'.

ianos arcusque cum quadrigis et insignibus triumphorum per regiones urbis tantos ac tot exstruxit, ut cuidam Graece inscriptum sit: 'arci'.

(Suetonius, *Domitianus* 13.2–3)

Through all the regions of the city, he constructed so many huge gateways and arches, decorated with chariots and triumphal insignia, that somebody wrote on one of them, in Greek, 'that's enough'.

The pun 'arci' (= Greek ἀρκεῖ) is difficult to translate. Its literal meaning 'that's enough' makes a pun with the Latin word for arch, *arcus*. However, the word is also close in pronunciation to another Greek word, ἄρχει ('he rules'), and in both Greek and Latin the stem 'ark-/arc-' is associated with enclosure and defence. Playing off these multiple associations, the pun obviously suggests the problem of finding the limit in Domitianic buildings, as well as the connection between the emperor's political power and his control of space through architecture. This control had once been the prerogative of the elite, but if Suetonius can be believed, Domitian took aim even at this memory. He restored many buildings, including some of the biggest, damaged or destroyed in the fires of 69 and 80 CE, 'but all of them under his own inscription and without any memory of the

first builder' (*sed omnia sub titulo tantum suo ac sine ulla pristini auctoris memoria*, Suet. *Dom.* 5.1).⁴²

As he marked thoroughfares throughout the city with arches, Domitian singled out for special treatment the part the Argiletum which ran between the Forum of Iulius Caesar and the Forum of Augustus to the north and the Forum of Vespasian to the south, connecting the Roman Forum with the Subura.⁴³ In this narrow space he constructed what came to be known as the Forum Transitorium. At one end of the Forum stood a temple of Minerva, Domitian's favourite deity, flanked by arched entryways, and at the other by a shrine to Janus; the long walls were ornamented by a colonnade articulated into thirty eight bays. Above the columns ran an entablature with a continuous frieze, and above this an attic story with central reliefs in each bay (fig. 41). The majority of the frieze has been lost, but a short section remains where the colonnade still stands, in the north-east corner. This portion of the frieze depicts the myth of Arachne, who challenged Minerva to a weaving contest and was punished by being beaten, and then transformed into a spider when she attempted to hang herself (fig. 42).

As D'Ambra points out, the myth of Arachne is not found elsewhere in Roman public art, and it in fact seems more 'private' than public in that it depicts women in a domestic context working with wool.⁴⁴ Yet, as a myth that illustrates Minerva's divine authority exacting punishment for human impiety, this subject matter seems entirely appropriate for a Forum dominated by Minerva's temple,

⁴² The complete sentence (*Dom.* 5.1): *plurima et amplissima opera incendio absumpta restituit, in quis et Capitolium, quod rursus arserat; sed omnia sub titulo tantum suo ac sine ulla pristini auctoris memoria* ('Many of the largest buildings destroyed by fire he rebuilt, among which was the Capitoline, which had burned again; but all of these only under his own name and without any mention of the first builders.') Jones (1993) 80 notes, using inscriptions from outside Rome, that Domitian's restorations are indicated by the words *Domitianus* . . . *restituit* ('Domitian restored [it]'), 'with no hint whatsoever of the identity of the emperor originally responsible, but also with not the slightest attempt to claim the structure as "his" . . .'. It is likely, however, that Suetonius' *plurima et amplissima opera* included many structures that were not originally built by emperors, but by the republican aristocracy. Thus it was the memory of this aristocracy as builders that Domitian's policy targeted, as well as that of previous emperors.

⁴³ For evidence and interpretation of the Forum Transitorium, see D'Ambra (1993) *passim*.

⁴⁴ D'Ambra (1993) 12.



Fig. 41. Forum Transitorium. D'Ambra (1993) pl. 18.



Fig. 42. Forum Transitorium: Attic relief and frieze. D'Ambra (1993) pl. 82.

and perhaps used for law courts.⁴⁵ In turn, this confirms Domitian's interest in reforming elite morality by controlling the behaviour of women.

[T]he punishment of Arachne serves as a grim reminder of the fate of those who defy the goddess, while the surrounding scenes of women spinning and weaving under the tutelage of Minerva represent models of virtue. Rather than depicting weaving as a craft or industry, the woolworking motif serves as a *topos* for the devout matron, the guardian of traditional society.⁴⁶

This interpretation takes the control of women as the real message of Domitian's use of the myth, consistent with taking moral improvement as the real point of the revival of the *Lex Iulia*: 'Domitian attempted to reinforce the Julian law on adultery in 89–90 CE in order to recast Roman society, to rehabilitate or, at least, inhibit the spoiled aristocracy and to impress the new elite from the provinces'.⁴⁷ D'Ambra's reading of the Arachne frieze is clearly the product of the rehabilitation of Domitian, which discovers beneath the *damnatio* a moral reformer along Augustan lines.

The problem is that moral renewal was probably not the intention of the author of the most famous literary version of the myth, Ovid, nor is this a case of Domitian happening to use a myth that Ovid happens to tell. The way Ovid treats the myth makes it not just the story of an ill-behaved woman's rebellion against divine, patriarchal authority, but also a rebellion against Augustan aesthetics and 'morality' by an elite Roman man. Minerva's tapestry is clearly ordered, with a central theme, the contest of Minerva and Neptune for Athens. This subject, as D'Ambra notes, is also found on the east frieze and west pediment of the Parthenon.⁴⁸ It can thus represent Augustus' use of Attic classicism as a dominant aesthetic model. Subordinate compositions in each corner of Minerva's tapestry represent the punishment through metamorphosis of impious mortals. In contrast, Arachne's tapestry shows the rapes of the gods, one of Ovid's most common themes, with no particular order or hierarchical arrangement—a nod to Ovid's own open-ended, non-classical treatment of narrative structure in the *Metamorphoses*. It seems plausible, then, that

⁴⁵ D'Ambra (1993) 47–59.

⁴⁶ D'Ambra (1993) 104.

⁴⁷ D'Ambra (1993) 105.

⁴⁸ D'Ambra (1993) 49.

Arachne's weaving represents Ovid as poet, and her punishment Augustus' official disapproval of Ovid and his poetry, which would lead to his exile and the removal of his books from the libraries.⁴⁹ Ovid died in exile, but the attempt to suppress his poetry was unsuccessful, and it remained extremely popular among the elite.

The reception of the Arachne frieze has to be considered together with Ovid's quasi-allegorical use of the myth. This would suggest that not only that it illustrates the control of women as a measure of proper order in the state, but also the control of men by imperial intervention in their 'private' morality and surveillance of their speech. Simply put, as Arachne is to Minerva, so are elite *men* to Domitian, as Ovid was to Augustus. Nor is the theme of metamorphosis beside the point. Arachne's transformation points to her loss of control over her own body, a constant issue for women in the ancient world, but a relatively new one for elite men reading Ovid or viewing this frieze. No amount of rehabilitation of any particular emperor can change the fact that these men became increasingly subject to investigation, loss of status, exile, beating, torture and execution over the first century not as a symptom of the republic's dissolution, but as a practice of imperial government. Through this, they became subjected to a new kind of fear and a new kind of coercion, resident now inside the supposedly impenetrable social contours of their bodies—and resident also in the massive demonstration of the control of public space in Neronian and Flavian architecture. These buildings, like the trials for treason, adultery, sexual misbehaviour—or the wrong kind of literature—marked the presence of an imperial gaze inside space that had once been their own.

⁴⁹ See Richlin (1999) 200–3 for the equation of an attack on a writer's books with an attack on his tongue as the instrument of free speech.

8. *PAR OPERI SEDES*: MRS ARTHUR STRONG AND
FLAVIAN STYLE, THE ARCH OF TITUS AND
THE CANCELLERIA RELIEFS

John Henderson

... like a leaf down a drain ...

(Lindsey Davis [2000] 15)

[1.1] Art has been *studied* under the banner of ‘The History of Art’ since Winckelmann’s mid Eighteenth Century. The sharply defined ascendancy of the Flavian Caesars conveniently occupies what easily passes for ‘the generation’ between the Julio-Claudian and Ulpian dynasties: the shock of Nero’s debacle and the trauma of the rolling civil conflicts that ensued underwrite the expectation of an emphatic cultural break to mark Vespasian’s restoration: a combination of willed direct affiliation to a prelapsarian Augustus and the celebration of a new peace on Nero’s grave. Halfway through the Flavian years the eruption of Vesuvius entombed the cities which preserve in cross-section our most promising diachronous sequence of styles across the range of buildings and artefacts; and Vesuvius was the death, too, of Pliny the Elder—but not before he had completed his *Naturalis Historia*, with its review of the various media of art production brought down from classical Greece to an apogee in contemporary Rome:¹

uerum et ad urbis nostrae miracula transire conueniat DCCCque annorum dociles scrutari uires et sic quoque terrarum orbem uictum ostendere, quod accidisse totiens paene, quot referentur miracula, apparebit, uniuersitate uero aceruata et in quendam unum cumulum coiecta non alia magnitudo exurget quam si mundus alius quidam in uno loco narretur ... forum ... diui Augusti et templum Pacis Vespasiani Imp. Aug. pulcherrima operum quae umquam uidit orbis. ...

(Pliny, *HN* 36.101–2)

¹ Had Pliny compiled an account of Flavian holdings of art for his *History of Rome*, which covered ‘the period from the accession of Nero to the Judaic triumph of Vespasian and Titus?’ (*HN praef.* 20. Sellers [1896] xcii)

Every time one of the wonders of Rome is put into words it will encapsulate the eight hundred year conquest of the planet—and, suppose the entirety is piled up and gathered into a single heap, then the enormity that will arise in the telling will be nothing short of some alternative universe compressed in a single spot. The culmination is Vespasian's Temple of Peace itself. . . .

Add to this the obliteration of the Flavians in a righteously acclaimed assassination, followed by eternal damnation of Domitian, and the conditions are perfect for expecting a distinctive 'epoch', one with a simple, and circumscribed, evolution, and, if possible, one with a special salience at the heart of ancient Art History.²

[1.2] In the late 1890s, Eugenie Sellers got married, initiated her own transformation into the doyenne of *Romanità* and announced to the world of classical studies, with the coming of the Twentieth Century, that it was time for 'Roman Art' to arrive. It was always likely that books on art in Antiquity would find 'The Flavian Age', or similar, an irresistibly handy chapter heading; but the particular critical pulsation which inspired Mrs Arthur Strong to leave her Hellenocentric focus behind, moving beyond Pliny's retrospect on Greek production to commit herself confidently to Roman art, and especially Roman sculpture, and gleeful in the certainty that Oxbridge would have to fall into line and follow her lead, was a bizarre brew of heady theorising hot off the press from two scholars working in Vienna.³ As Sellers/Strong quit Hellenophile Munich to join her husband in keeping the classical collections at Chatsworth, she kept in with Furtwängler who had already visited and would publish the pick of the Dukes of Devonshire's Greek (i.e., Roman 'copies' of Greek) acquisitions,⁴ but turned from translating his canonical *Masterpieces of Greek Sculpture*⁵ to bring the feisty iconoclasm of Franz Wickhoff to a wider public. *Roman Art. Some of Its Principles and Their Application to Early Christian Painting* was translated and edited by Mrs Strong for Heinemann and MacMillan (London) in 1900.⁶

² Cf. Hölscher (1992) 293 *et passim*.

³ Pliny: cf. Furtwängler (1887–88), in Furtwängler (1913) 1–71.

⁴ Thomson (1949) esp. 47: 1896, Sellers first lectured on Roman Art in London, Arthur Strong appointed librarian at Chatsworth; 1897, his first visit to Rome a hit, their marriage; a fifth-century bronze head lured Furtwängler over in Autumn 1895—plus the gems (p. 56): cf. Furtwängler (1901) 209–28, and Boschung, von Hesberg and Linfert (1997) 11.

⁵ Furtwängler (1895).

⁶ On Sellers/Strong: Beard (2000a) esp. 21–4 (her interests happen to elide entirely

[1.3] Sellers had already known the German original back in Munich;⁷ in May 1900, she lectured for the first time on Roman sculpture, 'mainly in the form of a running commentary on the aesthetic ideas put forward by Wickhoff in the book I was then translating'. She was widowed in 1904, appointed and then disappointed at Chatsworth, as death duties intervened, before miraculously finding haven and heaven in Rome as Assistant Director of the British School at Rome, which would become her career niche (1909–25). Her 'little book'⁸ (408 pages) on *Roman Sculpture: From Augustus to Constantine* (1907: as from Chatsworth) rises above the 'many [who] think the time is not yet ripe for a book on Roman art, and that a subject which lends itself to conflicting views is among those 'unsafe' to bring before students', revelling in the pedagogical charms of 'freshness', and the conviction that Oxbridge would have to acknowledge Antiquity after 100 CE.⁹ She sets out fully the striking ideas that will underpin her work, before shooing an array of instant rebuttals that range from plain nutty to downright canny. When a (re-worked) Italian version appeared in 1923, much still passed muster, though the Ara Pacis was now feted rather than disdained, and given a chapter of its own. 'L'Età dei Flavi' and 'L'Arte nell'Epoca dei Flavi' still dominate proceedings. In her retirement book, *Art in Ancient Rome* (1929), she runs up the same colours: 'Like everyone else who works in the Roman field, I am primarily indebted, on this as on former occasions, to Wickhoff and Riegl'.¹⁰ No new theorists ever joined the two Viennese gurus there for her from the start, as the start, though her enthusiasm did damp down a good deal. Their ideas still served to deliver the prize boast:¹¹

The perfect adaptation of Roman forms to the expression of Christian ideas is one of the most astonishing phenomena in the whole history of art.

[1.4] It remains true that Wickhoff and Alois Riegl are the only theorists from art criticism 'outside' classical studies to have made a

the period of the marriage). This rushed chapter is to thank her for getting me to Rome and opening my eyes.

⁷ Jex-Blake and Sellers (1896) unpag. (Preface as from Munich, July 1896), xcix (bibliography); Wickhoff (1895).

⁸ Strong (1929) 1.vi.

⁹ Strong (1929) 1.vii, 10, 24.

¹⁰ Strong (1929) 1.viii.

¹¹ Strong (1929) 2.207.

direct and central impact on mainstream Roman Art; and this in spite of the fact that almost all their ideas were effectively and noisily shot down before Strong's book on sculpture was written. Despite thorough and systematic dismantling long since, notably by Brendel (1979 < 1953), and despite a big drive to substitute the *marxisant* Bianchi Bandinelli as the true inspiration of study of Roman Art,¹² virtually no book on Roman art can yet refuse (at least traces of) that Viennese route toward lionising Flavian Art. Wickhoff picked up on Riegl's *Stilfragen* (1893); Riegl modified the conclusions of Wickhoff (1895) in his *Late Roman Art Industry* (1901: left incomplete at his death in 1905), his deucedly difficult attempt to systematise the ineluctable trajectory in the formal development of all regimes of representation: 'the most ambitious attempt ever made to interpret the whole course of art history in terms of changing modes of perception'.¹³ Strong planted Wickhoff's work in the heart of Classics, and when founding her ground-breaking work on Roman Sculpture on the whole oeuvre of both 'the pioneers in the new criticism of Roman art'¹⁴, her introduction was also able to set out the first overview of their ideas in the round. If she ever read more art theory she does not thrust it upon our attention. As time went by, she would play up Augustan art, while rapturous quotation of the master stroke of analysis eventually turned turtle—'It would be fantastic nowadays to follow Wickhoff in comparing these reliefs with the paintings of Rembrandt or Velasquez, yet . . .'.¹⁵ But for her readers, 'The Flavian Age' never lost the ascendancy it gained in Vienna.¹⁶

[1.5] It is a shock to confront the pioneer works themselves. Both critics robustly reject any idea that art 'declined' in Late Roman Antiquity. In finding a positive contribution for art between Hellenism and the Renaissance, they had the great advantage for Romanists of bonding the production of imperial Rome to Early Christianity

¹² Brilliant (1994) 265 on Bianchi Bandinelli (1970) (*q.v.* esp. 109 for his take on the Viennese), (1971) and esp. (1960) 267–83.

¹³ Gombrich (1977) 15; cf. Minor (1994) 106–12; Preziosi (1998) 169–76 is taken from the introduction to Riegl (1901) (misdated 1893 at Preziosi [1998] 169).

¹⁴ Strong (1907) 22.

¹⁵ Strong (1929) 1.53.

¹⁶ Cf. D. Strong (1988) 14: 'The work of these two men effectively created the subject of Roman art'; cf. Pfanner (1983) *lf.*, 59 n. 23. 'Velasquez' has become the litmus of their permeation of the subject.

through Byzantium and on into the modern world. Wickhoff, passionately engaged with contemporary impressionism and its criticism, supplied essays on the artwork in the oldest illustrated manuscript of the Bible, the 'Vienna Genesis', to accompany von Härtel's scholarly description of the MS and (Greek) text: a joint supplement to the *Jahrbuch der Kunstsammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*. Coaxed by Strong, Wickhoff's contribution was extracted and filleted away from the *Genesis*, and his illustrations re-thought. The key moves, however, were to add a new first paragraph:¹⁷

If we wish to make clear to ourselves the principles of Roman art . . . we shall find it simplest to work backwards to the sources. . . . It is evident . . . that, in the interval during the first three centuries of the Roman Empire, a powerful reaction must have taken place. . . .

Let us begin by investigating the circumstances which led to the illustration of the Bible.

And, before all, to *change the title, and sub-title, to blazon 'Roman Art'*. The axiom is that Christian representation was unGreek: Rome *must* have been where the changes began. With Riegl's help, we can resist the ineluctability of the Winckelmannian 'organic' template for stylistic traditions, which are born, mature, and die, and free narrow classicists from the simple grid of a single Greek(/Roman) era which condemns Rome to the decadence, decline, and death of Antiquity, and so an easy decision to wind down classical civilisation with Pliny and Pompeii, side by side with the canon of Latin Literature, traditionally terminated by the retrospect of Juvenal and Tacitus. Wickhoff's agenda asked:¹⁸

How and when was a *Roman* art developed?

How is the *continuous* method of narration its result?

And under what circumstances was this method adopted for Christian representations?

Music to a Romanist's ears. 'It is that *illusionist style* which reached in the second and third centuries A.D. its first highest embodiment such as it was not to find again before the seventeenth century.' ('Rubens, Hals, and Velasquez . . .')¹⁹ And, specifically, 'the rapid growth of the illusionist style was really the result of preparatory

¹⁷ Wickhoff (1900) 1.

¹⁸ Wickhoff (1900) 21.

¹⁹ Wickhoff (1900) 18.

work done by the imitative-naturalistic school. Without that intermediate Augustan style, art could never have made the step from Greek to Latin. . . . Extant works show that the metamorphosis was complete by the time of the Flavii.²⁰ Hard to reconcile, this particular choice of triumphalism, with traditional ratings of Flavian poetry. And hard to square with any (Winckelmannian) postulate that art flourishes in conditions of cultural 'freedom'—not Domitian-style tyranny and degradation. But a blow against the autocracy of Helenism, for all that. And further accommodation was possible: Wickhoff rated the Ara Pacis a clumsy failure in craftsmanship as well as a proof that Roman eyes should stop trying to look and carve as if they were Greeks;²¹ but *he* had only seen some battered fragments of the Altar, and *we* need not stick rigidly to his schemata. . . .²²

[1.6] Riegl, now. Working with au courant notions of *Zeitgeist*, Riegl moved from philosophical aesthetics and Law into curating decorative art, with rugs and textiles for specialism (the 'minor arts'). Engrossed in decorative patterns and their mutation within a given cultural tradition, he determined that an inevitable *Kunstwollen* drives all artistic production along an evolutionary path that leads, always, from the 'haptic' (or tactile) to the 'optic' (painterly, we could say). His iconoclastic brand of cultural proto-semiotics would one day attract avant garde critics,²³ but his maieutic for embryonic Roman Art was a power-discourse and daedalic prose style which turned the tables on the Greek miracle of naturalism. Pointing to a collective quest bent on the achievement across the range of mimesis of an impressionistic illusionism founded on 'depth' effects (in a word, *Raumillusionismus*), Riegl claimed Rome made progress by transcending solid self-contained shapes within well-defined contours. Since examples of both tendencies abound in all figural art, and indeed mimetic art is dialectically constituted by their polarity,²⁴ the game of revaluation depends on the selection preferred within each cultural ensemble; and, meantime, it is possible to mark out mini-economies in which the inescapable shift can be deciphered as required, and

²⁰ Wickhoff (1900) 48.

²¹ Wickhoff (1900) 75.

²² Cf. Strong (1907) 56.

²³ Esp. Gandelman (1991) esp. 1-13; cf. Torelli (1992) 1.

²⁴ Brendel (1979) 60 3.

(naturally) to discount rival terms of analysis. Rousing, but dangerously teleological-totalitarian; anyhow, intricately applied to the fascinating minutiae of artistic detail—here was a conceptual matrix for culture viewed as ‘system’. An injunction to relate all available objects and fragments, not to mention the masses of repeat patterning that survive, to the vital core of the Roman imperial powerhouse; and to claim for Roman Art paternity of, not antipathy toward, Christian imaging.²⁵

2

Titus’ or Trajan’s? No—’tis that of Time:

Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth displace scoffing

(Byron, *Childe Harold*)

[2.1] What, then, *was* ‘Roman’ about Flavian Roman Art? Wickhoff’s star turn was the pair of archway reliefs on the Arch of Titus in Rome, which ‘shows how a stroke of genius solved the problem of producing a completely illusionist effect in relief work’.²⁶ In fact, this *was* Flavian Art for him—but praise where praise is due, Wickhoff’s investment in *his* stroke of observational genius has opened eyes for a century now to the complexities of [the Alinari photographs of] these famous reliefs (figs 25, 43). See how ‘the principle of shadows’ energises the rows of figures:²⁷

so that when the shadows of the front row . . . fell on [the back row] and they themselves cast no shadow, the illusion was created that their shadow fell on the earth behind them, and thus that the background vanished behind them. . . . A frame is simply thrown open and through it we look at the march past of the triumphal procession. We are to believe that the people are moving there before our eyes. . . . Everything is concentrated on the one aim of producing an impression of continuous motion. Air, light and shade, are all pressed into the service and must help to conjure up reality. The relief has ‘Respirazion’ like the pictures of Velasquez. . . .

²⁵ E.g., Swift (1951) esp. 148–76, still acclaiming the ‘epoch-making’ Viennese pair.

²⁶ Wickhoff (1900) 76.

²⁷ Wickhoff (1900) 76, 78. Pfanner (1983) 59 for cold water on all this, and more (esp. ‘Flavian baroque’); cf. Gazda and Haackl (1996) 31.

Wickhoff revels in the rhythmic impression of continuous movement in the 'Spoils' scene, where one ('much injured') bearer of the golden table for the shew-bread 'suddenly halts to turn and look along the procession behind him'. And in the vision of a golden shimmer of paint from the great menorah candlestick fighting the shadows which its high relief throws behind (menacing the overall effect posited by his analysis), he exults in the necessity it witnesses for colouristic illusionism, not least where the depicted arch meets the surface of the relief, 'only half-indicated plastically'.²⁸ See the procession loom out from the scene to encompass the viewer, before wheeling left through the archway in the relief. Off into the receding background that combines with the 'hiccup' of that bearer who twists around, to hold the train from leaving us behind. Feel the atmosphere that fills the 'deep space' conjured up by the composition in 3-D, as the background seems to bow concave as the procession bulges our way (actual depth 0.27–9 m.: ~ figures 1.30–50 m. tall; total height of panels 2.00–2.03 m.). On the facing relief, meet the emperor's chariot as it confronts us from out of the panel surface, while the team is guided 'out' through a ninety degree left turn 'as though it were coming round a curve towards the spectator'. As though, indeed, 'the procession is conceived . . . as following the curve of a road',²⁹ and we are, momentarily, in its path. . . .

[2.2] Art is good for such play with the imagination, and vice versa; but very likely most reader-viewers will have already taken their distance from undiluted illusion-spotting. Quite apart from specific awkwardnesses (especially with the frontal emperor and his heraldic foursome of flattened carousel horses,³⁰ there are the oddly frontal candlestick and hoist placards in the 'Spoils' scene. We won't all agree whether the traffic of criss-crossing projectiles above the massed groups of bodies flattens or deepens the visual fields, increases the hustle and bustle or plays it down; whether pace is checked, or gathers momentum. More than this, though, we will fall out over the balance between (say) referentiality and symbolism in the representational register. *Flavian* stylistics are in point because we identify this

²⁸ Wickhoff (1900) 79, 80. "Impossible, since the *titulus* stands in the way"—and corrected by Riegl (Wace [1906] 279).

²⁹ Strong (1929) 2.54. Diagrammed and given precision by Pfanner (1983) 60.

³⁰ Pfanner (1983) 59–60.

Arch as celebrating the triumph of Vespasian and Titus 'Over the Jews': 71 CE. It counts as a leading paradigm of the famous 'Roman historical relief', because it resums a determinate event in (imperial) history; and this allows us to label the stove-in figure aboard the chariot as Titus. Which is to play down features that it shares with reliefs which parade a status or power-role, but *without* specific occasionality.³¹ But this *is* the Arch of Titus, and he is aloft alone because it is not, not simply, a triumphal arch. This monument consecrates the 'triumph' of his apotheosis, attested in the vault of the arch, where Titus is glimpsed—illusionistically—'through' the ceiling, winging his way to his Father's side on the eagle that bears him to Olympus: 81 CE. And so *two* ceremonial moments are commemorated in one (arch): their yoking works 'history' into the ideological pliancy of myth, spanning back to the origins of the Flavian dynasty in their imperial conquest of territory for Rome, not in their victory in civil war and coup d'état: 69–70 CE.³² And the temporality reaches out to encompass Domitian, too—as the Flavian who could divinise his family, but who would have no family to divinise him, at the end of the line: 96 CE. As we shall see, Flavian time concertinas in and out, decades/minutes; instants of eternity as eternal instances.

[2.3] The *formal* properties or mimetics of the image scarcely engage with its programmatic negotiation between the symbolic wonder of supernatural charisma, and the realist familiarity of human beings occupied in mundane sociality. Yes, a horse parade *is* like that, a pageant of spoils needs cooperative shouldering like this—they *did* at the time, 'on the day'. But the flying angel, the helmeted female at the horses' nose, the topless male at their beam-end . . . : how *could* they inhabit the same space as the likes of us? How should Roman ritual deny the triumphal parade all the miraculous hyperreality of another heaven-sent victory? Marching the holy relics beneath the Roman arch was, not least, tribute to Jove in the highest, above the trounced god of Judaea. There is so much strenuous work in this spectacular mimesis, no explicitly formulated interpretation is going to do duty for the impact the Reliefs make on 'the', or any, viewer. 'Illusionism!' is no more than a preliminary exclamation—pre-text for response. Crucially, it is resolutely under-contextualised as a

³¹ Torelli (1992) esp. 1, 119; cf. Brilliant (1999) 225.

³² Cf. Levick (1999) 71.

measure of scopic design. On one hand, it sets the power of the monument to create specific meaning at a discount; on the other, it knows no mediation in terms of 'genre'.

[2.4] Nor has Roman Art made enough effort to investigate *Flavian* viewing. Yet it *can* be done, to an extent. The poet Statius is hard to beat for a word in our ear about how to set about it. The first of his *Silvae*, on 'Domitian's Greatest of Horses', the equestrian statue set up in the Roman Forum, pipes up a hundred verses of induction to his mannerist poetics of celerity, the flash impressionistic word-painting of a lyric 'I' let loose on the invasion of public space by the dominating presence of a monster effigy of might.³³ Excitational verbal spasms jab and jar each strained phrase as this wide-eyed poet catches a thousand years of Forum Latinity into the unveiling ceremony of the brazen enormity set to lord it over Roman eternity.³⁴ 'The work matches its site': *par operi sedes* (*Silv.* 1.1.22). The poem, Statius' *opus*, models a sound-bite dash for (a) Flavian *mentalité*,³⁵ it lives up to its programmatic role for the poetics of the corpus ahead (*par* . . . *sedes* ~ grand ole *operi*). You had to be there! You are!

[2.5] This isn't the place for a reading of this greatest of poemettes. But I must gesture towards showing how masterfully Statius hosts art: *par operi sedes*.

* He immediately pinpoints the ratio between (i) the main components of the imperial artwork, and (ii) the artwork and its setting, as the producer of its meaning (*Silv.* 1.1.1–2).

* Rider on horse (hyperbolic colossus atop mountain), the monument 'embracing' the Forum (inside-out paradox): as he will soon sloganise, *par operi sedes*. The 'Latin Forum' embraces its new excrescence by matching the *opus* to settings in Roman myth, poetry, history. Too great a beast for Virgilian epic and its disastrous Trojan Horse, but securely ridden by a prince of peace. A metal match for the real thing, a fit charger for Mars in *his* wild setting—mighty lungfuls of epic panting fit to release an epic torrent of verse (*Silv.* 1.1.2–21: *par* . . . *par*, 17–18).

* Here in the Forum, the Flavian giant faces, and faces down, Iulius Caesar across at his temple, with matching basilicas to protect his flank(s), and Jupiter

³³ Vessey (1986) 2762–4, 2757–9; Henderson (1998) 103–7; cf. Darwall-Smith (1996) 227–33. Yes, I kept within Statius' 24-hour limit to *write* this chapter.

³⁴ Ahl (1984a) 91–101, esp. 93 on Iulius in the Forum, 99 on Caesar ~ Domitian. Domitian saddled up: Brilliant (1963) 95–7; Bergeman (1990) 176 (Katalog M96).

³⁵ *Caveat*: this slice of textuality between 70 and 96 CE *may* be a sliver left over from Neronian literarity, a (perhaps paradoxical?) element of avant garde persistence.

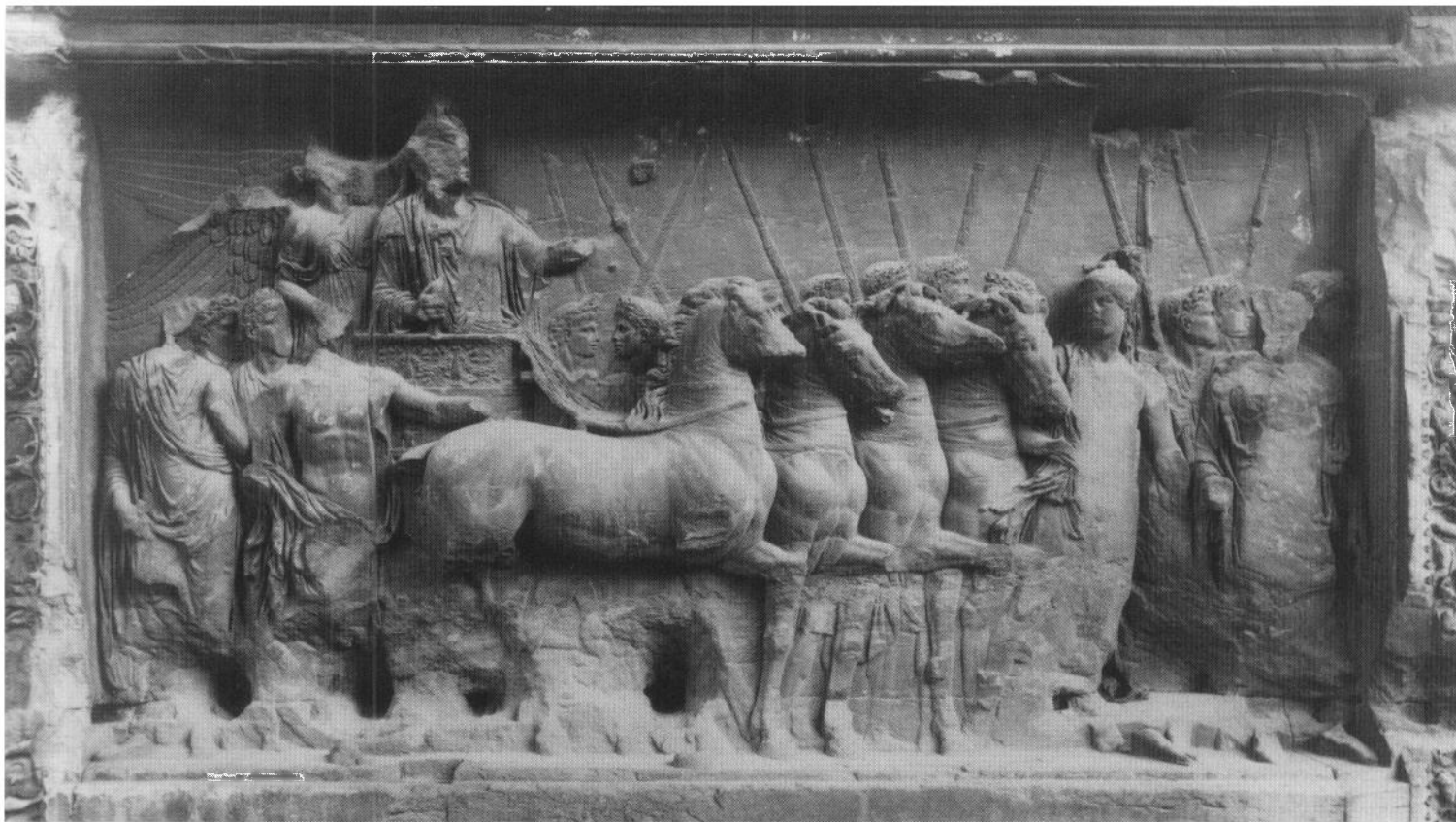


Fig. 43. Arch of Titus: the 'Triumphator' Relief, reversed right/left. Alinari 5839.

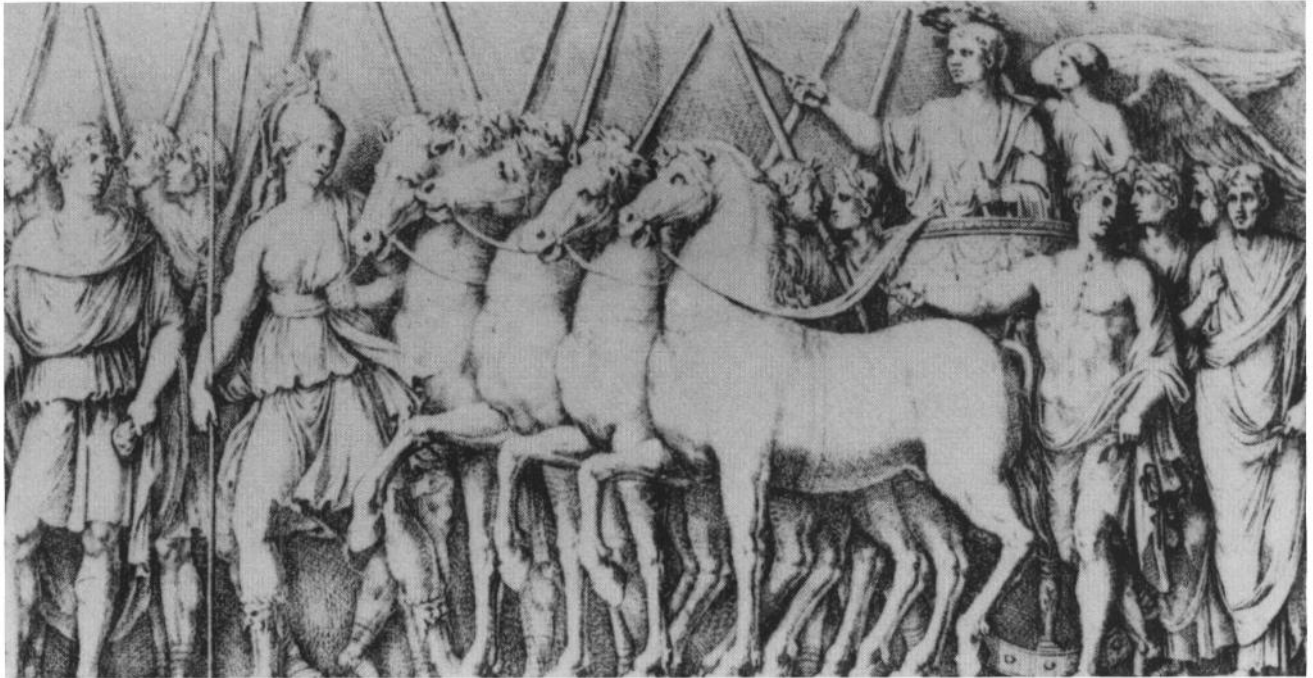


Fig. 44. Arch of Titus. Bellori (1690), Tafeln 3f., via Pfanner (1983): Tafel 4.3.

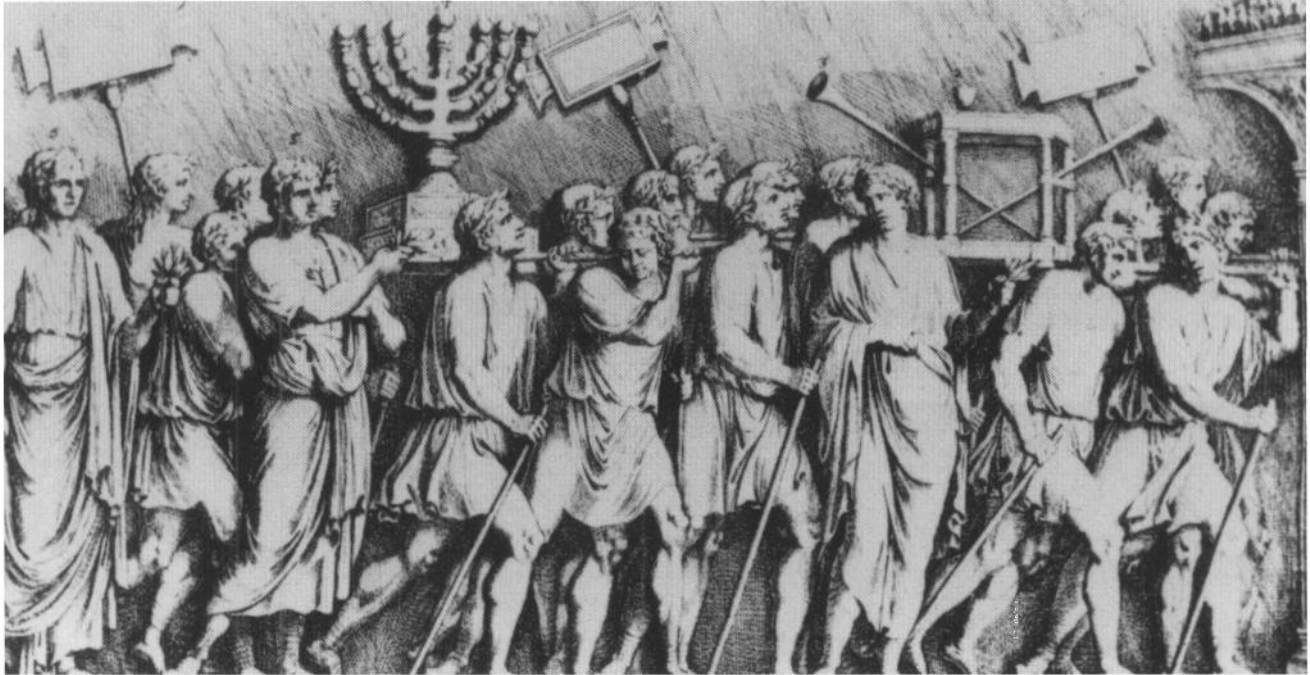


Fig. 45. Arch of Titus. Bellori (1690), Tafeln 3f., via Pfanner (1983): Tafel 4.4.



Fig. 46. Cancelleria Relief 'A'. Magi (1945): Tavola I (sopra).

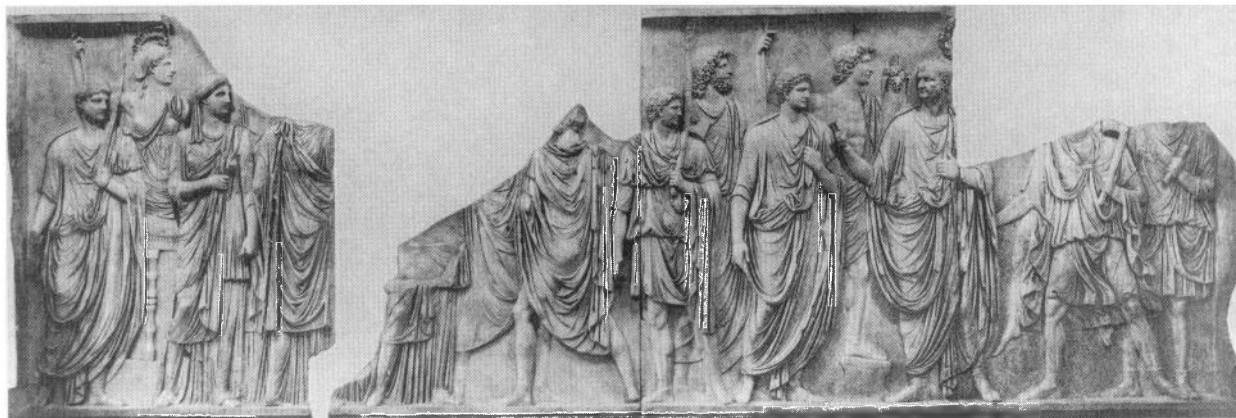


Fig. 47. Cancelleria Relief 'B'. Magi (1945): Tavola I (sotto).

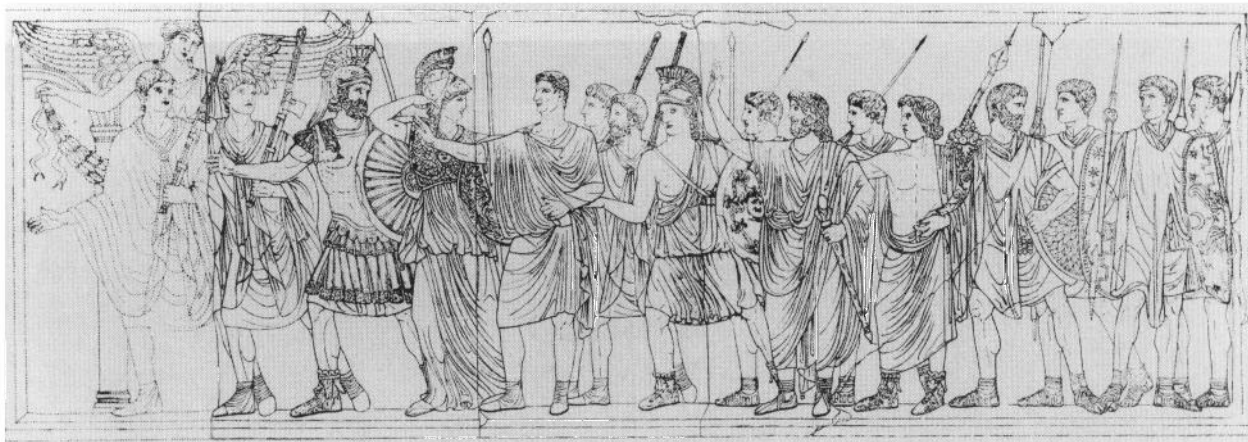


Fig. 48. Cancellaria Relief 'A'. Magi (1945): Tavola Agg. D (sopra).



Fig. 49. Cancellaria Relief 'B'. Magi (1945): Tavola Agg. D (sotto), but reversed right/left.

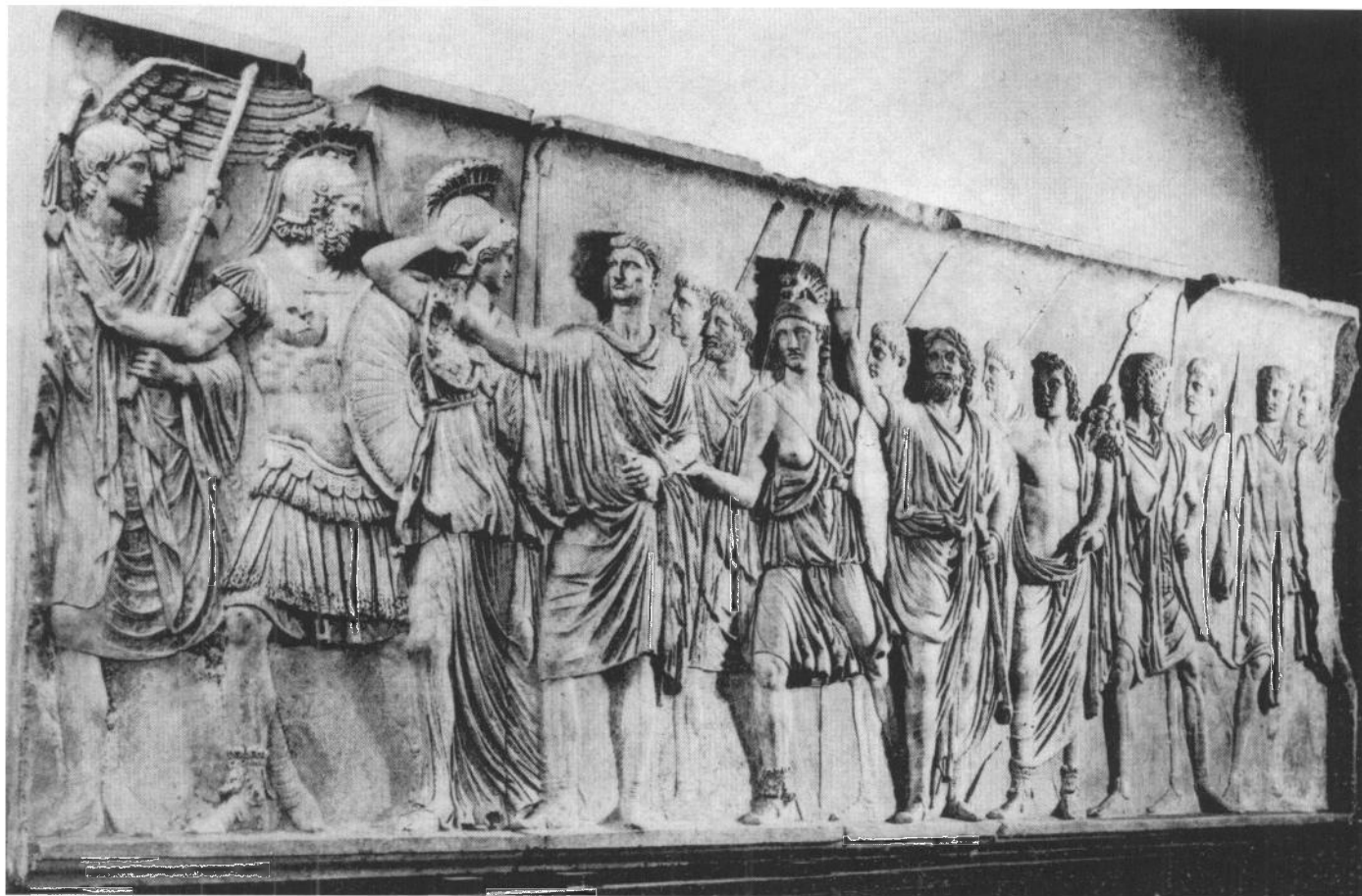


Fig. 50. Cancelleria Relief 'A' oblique view. Magi (1945) 157 fig. 74.



Fig. 51. Cancellaria Relief 'B' panel 1: the moment of discovery. Magi (1945) 44 fig. 43.



Fig. 52. Cancellaria Relief 'B': detail of Victory's flying left foot. Magi (1945) 32 fig. 36.

and Concord to watch his back. For *that* savage victor in civil war wound up perforated in the Forum and found the quick way to heaven: in public space, the collective memory always sizes up heroes against a civic backdrop (*Silv.* 1.1.22–31).

* But this rider in the sky commands the cityscape with a panoptic gaze of his own, watching the building sites deliver satisfying sights (*Silv.* 1.1.32–6).

* And he is himself plinth to his own darling rider, Minerva (*lecta deae sedes*, *Silv.* 1.1.40): appropriately, the right hand quells armed resistance, while the left is *not* saddled with weight—or contact—from the untouchable, untouched virgin goddess. So Domitian and Minerva make a pair: the miniature Minerviola safe in his hands, perched statuesque on his base hand—arts matching hearts (37–42). Rider and horse menace alike (44, 47); no, they will never part (54–5). The monument itself, though, sits heavy on its soil (56–60: *insesta*, 56).

* The project has sped ahead, echoes ringing round Rome as much a wonder as the workforce concentrated on the *opus*. To the point where the setting produced a horse-sense hero of the Forum worthy to acclaim the new rider of the storm. Fitting the waterhole spot (*locus/lacus*, *Silv.* 1.1.66–7, 73, 83 = *sede*, 77) which he guards forever, the Roman legend Curtius rejoices to have his new neighbour settling in, a patriot more than a match for his own mythic ride: civic lore would measure Domitian against the cracked knight who saved Rome by galloping into the hellish abyss that yawned across this very setting in the Forum, and draw up its own equivalences for this devil's work (61–5; 66–83).

* Another mounted artwork, sited over against the temple in Caesar's own (imperial) Forum, word always had it, (must've) swapped the head of Caesar for Alexander's, prompting perennial comparisons of greatness. Now proportionately dwarfed by Domitian's greatest of steeds, and with itching purple neck to match (*Silv.* 1.1.84–90: *sede*, 85). This *opus* will stand, in fine fettle, till poetry is dead, and in depth of night our rider will dangle the whole clan of his hugging dead/divinised relatives without a tremor from his, from his mount's, single neck. A family group in just the setting (91–8; *locum*, 98).

* World artists would want this our work for their own special locations; but we want it and its original both to stay put, keep house, and watch the future live up to the vows of the present—honouring the imperial statue and its blessing, this gifthorse of a poem (*Silv.* 1.1.99–107).

Truly a masterclass in bizarre cueing of site to installation, leaping across prompts visual and verbal, lexical or intertextual, from toponym to archive. A poetry so attuned to its culture, every metrical *sedes* customised for its occupant, medium welded to message, that it is easy to sense 'mood', and in the ready to-and-fro of stimulus between the arts, maybe even the hint of a 'Will-to-Art', the *Kunstwollen* we firmly discarded as dangerous hocus pocus when it issued from Riegl?

[2.6] At any rate, Statius' dogged annexation of statue to location, as of part to whole, makes for an extended lesson in reading any art object, including any relief panel. Of course the colossus on his

heaving mount is no archway relief: the genres of monument are even antithetical opposites, for the android scarecrow incarnates central authority's grip on every avenue of civic life, while arches control and condition all who traipse the roads into Rome. Radiation versus subjugation.³⁶ They share first principles, however: built in stone/cast in metal to last, they draw rather than defeat naughty boys and bad drivers, rioters and revellers. Where the plinth withdraws the vulnerable statue from harm's way, the arch is festooned with lavish cladding, to protect its lines *with* vulnerability. The knight is legible through body language—hand signals, gaze, armour; the arch is a giant noticeboard, with dedications inscribed, imperial portraiture showcased, and familiar trophies and badges strewn across each façade. Both genres celebrate might, brandishing the promise of secure defence of the realm and subjugation of the enemy; but inevitably warning, too, that public space is 'pacified' of civic disorder, and disseminating the terms for a populace's obeisance. Monumentalised violence is much the most common denominator.³⁷ In the case of the Arch of Titus, our early nineteenth-century restoration reproduces the main fabric, but precious little decorative work survives to play off against the archway reliefs. We do, however, have them *in situ*, and they do have *each other*. One very basic requirement for seeing them as a pair, matched as each other's mirror-image, is to resist viewing them flat on a page/screen together. They *can* be inspected frontally from across the passage-way, as in most photographs; but not easily or well. And, besides, visitors in person must always submit to the necessity of approaching both side reliefs by entering the archway along the road, from one direction or the other: no one will miss the fit of orientation that marches marble on its sacred way into the city, bound for Jupiter's Capitol (just come into full view ahead) to deposit choice spoils and the triumphator's tithe of victory. Why, the swerves of parade and chariot even rhyme with the divergence of the Palatine's Nova Via off to the procession's left, away from Via Sacra swinging right and down into the Forum.³⁸ The stop-go rhythms of travel/pause on the 'Spoils' and 'Triumphator'

³⁶ Colossus: Stewart (1993) 90; Michalski (1998). Arch: Wallace-Hadrill (1990b) 143–81, esp. 144–9; Levick (1999) 128f.

³⁷ Mitchell (1994) 371–96: 'The violence of public art', discussing Richard Serras' *Tilted Arc*.

³⁸ Ryberg (1967) 7, 18 notes that the triumphal chariot is reversed left/right from its normal schema—to face down the spectator ascending from the Forum.

Reliefs are not the only game on: which of us will miss the dialectical correspondence between Titus and that holy Candlestick (a joint function for their 'absurd' frontality)? For all their differences, the tableau bearers do make up another 'team' that must pull together, manoeuvring under orders to ensure *their* precious burden does not crash. . . . Dyadic polarities become equations, meanings swap and refract. *Because* this is an archway, there is strong motivation to respect symmetrical reciprocities, and follow them where they may lead. . . .

[2.7] Coins aside, no more than scholars a century ago can we inspect any extant triumphal arch earlier than Titus', but from surviving specimens from the next dynasty we can see how much complexity the drive to hang protective carving from every available surface on a public arch can drum up. Trajan's Arch at Benevento is next in line, bearing its full load of reliefs on every facing. It sports endless polyrhythms of patterning left/right, row above/row below, right/left symmetry around the archway; plus major antitheses/responses between the two opposite faces of the arch, for all that no viewer would ever be in a position to bracket them in a single continuous look 'in the round'. Wickhoff's championing of Titus' Arch must seem ever more arbitrary, as well as entirely missing the particular experience of arch-gazing. By contrast, Inez S. Ryberg (1967) performed a brilliant tour de force in 'virtual' retrieval of an entirely lost Arch. She detaches from their second *sedes* on the Arch of Constantine the set of relief panels that were shifted to bless the new age emperor with a victory over the centuries, trumping his triumph over the contemporary enemy, and then artfully arranges them on her 'Arch of M. Aurelius'. Studying each panel from every plausible angle of viewing, she dismisses the canonical photographer's head-on view, on the level, and, instead, follows up implied trajectories of scan-path for the marble figures, minutely attends to their interactivity and co-presence, and attunes to such factors as energised bulge and gestural clarity when deducing 'an optimum view' for each scene.³⁹ As she tells it, the resulting assignment of panels to projected space on the lost monument fell out perfectly—perfectly spontaneously. Of course the blueprint she comes up with for Roman arch design is hard to substantiate or trust, given how few examples

³⁹ Ryberg (1967) 8.

of the genre survive, and in what dilapidation.⁴⁰ But the more important point is that this is systematically misleading as a model for how viewing monumental relief sculpture works. This it *never* does. In the specific case of archway reliefs, our no-nonsense axiom must be that viewers *approach* the scenes: at a distance, from the road, their symmetrical positioning to flank anyone who enters and passes through is obvious. Long before the oblique angle widens to permit any recognition of the figuration. To draw near may be to 'side with' one pier at the expense of the other, but this is a minor differential compared with the certainty that, the higher the relief carving, the more the postures, relations, and gestures will have been moving around for the viewer. And they will never finally settle, however relentlessly an 'optimal' perspective is prescribed for the obedient or responsive spectator. Viewing in this genre just *is* 'dioramic', and spatial illusionism is a dimension of the genre rather than specially virtuoso artistry.⁴¹ Ironies abound here: emperors are regularly (though certainly not in Titus' 'Triumphator' Relief)⁴² given the most free-standing personal space of all; they lead, rule, stand out; they are backed up by whole ranks of solidary figures lined up behind them; prominence is their prerogative. But because this is so, they are specially at risk of defacement, damage, and deterioration. Above all, drastic loss of high profile arms out front of the picture plane devastates the charismatic waves, clasps, and benedictions of royalty. Yet manual gestures are cardinal in most human proxemics this side of murderous melee, where harpooning and sticking extend a helping hand for their over-achieving semiotics. Meantime, subordinate 'extras', flat in/as the background, have least 'mobility', minimal expressive potentialities. And least vulnerability to obliteration. So it is that Time dealt Titus' dance into eternity the selective battering which any high relief audacity invites (cf. figs 44–5).

[2.8] These Byronic reflections evoke another. My thought-train left the 'artistic' reverie of Wickhoff way back yonder; and rejoined the

⁴⁰ Brilliant (1994) 365f.

⁴¹ Cf. Rogers (1974) esp. 100–4. Ryberg (1967) 7 reserves such 'stereoscopic effect' for the deep reliefs of a 'new' '—Antonine'—'illusionism'—starting with . . . Trajan's Arch at Benevento.

⁴² Titus' head is a mess, all the same; and the nub of the scene, his right arm, is missing (along with its reinforcing echo from the personification below): Brilliant (1963) 94; Pfanner (1983) 48f.

‘archaeologist’ and the ‘architect’ at Mrs Strong’s ear. Even when she was lapping up the Viennese theory, she saw plainly that iconophilia is blind to context:⁴³

To open a frame through which we look at the march past of the triumphal procession is perhaps an achievement of doubtful merit when this frame covers the whole width of the lateral pier and nearly half its height. An open window is not precisely the feature most suited here. The flatter designs of Trajanic art—with less insistence on the illusion of depth—may to many seem more appropriate to architectural decoration. [sc., I know they would to me if a widow like me/any woman could afford to dispense with my lifeline to intellectual respectability.]

Strong’s colleagues knew from the outset that the Arch of Titus could hardly be held to *typify* Flavian style, let alone Roman Art. The archway reliefs obey a particular stylistic decorum—official, ceremonial, traditional; but also improvisational, focussed on occasion. And they build on the specific contextualisation of their location under the generic umbrella of the Roman triumphal arch. The reliefs mean to stand proud of the run of contemporary artistic production, however their difference depends on comparison with their like and unlike, alike. However ambitiously they may have aspired to sum up their cultural cosmos. Already at the turn of the century the choice was, unmistakably, there: Rome could either be mythologised as one essentialised nation, or looked in the eye as the melting-pot of Antiquity.⁴⁴ Fake ‘racism’ in purist fear of otherness within (from Cato to Musso)—or a welter of multiculturalism with unprecedented command of artistic resources (and Hadrian for hero)? And, in the end, feet back on the ground, you had to face it eventually: the theory just didn’t survive on-site inspection, not for a moment. Eugen Petersen for one, Strong’s stalwart support, saw through the guff instantly: Wickhoff hadn’t *shown* that ‘illusionism’ worked significantly differently under the Arch, compared with what could be elicited from the Ara Pacis, or from its antecedents in Hellenistic relief where spatialising depth effects were far from unknown (the Telephus Frieze of the Great Altar at Pergamum, for a start).⁴⁵ And what nonsense

⁴³ Strong (1907) 116f.

⁴⁴ On Strzygowski’s pitch that Orientalising seeded Roman imperial creativity (1901): Strong (1907) xii–xv; cf. Brendel (1979) 41; cf. Courbaud (1899) x, resisting Wickhoff (1895).

⁴⁵ Cf. Wace (1906) 276.

the 'shadow theory' had to be—fancy not realising that reliefs tucked under facing sides of an archway are in the *worst* situation imaginable for processing Roman sunshine into artistic atmospherics!⁴⁶ *Par operi sedes*, indeed: armchair fantasy! So Wace:⁴⁷

No one who has seen the arch of Titus can have failed to notice the grotesque shadows the figures in high relief cast over the background and over one another, when the sunlight penetrates below the vault from the east in the morning, and from the west at evening.

3

... since there is little about the Cancelleria Reliefs that is incontrovertible ...

(Diana Kleiner [1992] 191)

[3.1] In Wickhoff's and Riegl's day, there was nothing to put up beside the Arch of Titus by way of 'Roman historical reliefs' with a Flavian date. Just before World War II,⁴⁸ the chance find(s) of a half dozen mighty panels of Carrara marble in the gardens of the Palazzo della Cancelleria Apostolica,⁴⁹ on the Campus Martius in Rome (Corso Vittorio Emanuele), cancelled all that. And Filippo Magi, Director of the Vatican Museums, clearly had a good war, ready already to wow the new dawn in 1945. Here we have an *opus* without centuries of misguided and factually incorrect lore cluttering the view (figs 46–7). One blessed with thoroughly monumental publication that combines the scruples of modern technique with (yes) oodles of aesthetic warmth. And *this* massive chunk of Flavian

⁴⁶ Petersen (1902) 157 and esp. n. 2; his help acknowledged, Strong (1907) ix; 23, his 'scant sympathy for [the] artistic side [of Roman archaeology]': old school Vienna, Conze-style. Cf. Wace (1906) 275: 'Petersen alone has combated [the 'shadow theory']; and with such effect as practically to destroy all belief in this theory, which is Wickhoff's main principle in the appreciation of Roman reliefs, especially those of the Flavian period.' In triumph: Pfanner (1983) esp. 103: '... Zudem fehlen sachlich korrekte Beschreibungen, die zahlreiche frühere Literatur ist grossteils schon rein faktisch falsch'.

⁴⁷ Wace (1906) 276.

⁴⁸ Just in time for a cast to be sent to join Mussolini's *Mostra Augustea della Romanità*: Magi (1945) xvii. News flash: Magi (1939) 508–11 (the first find was in 1937).

⁴⁹ A gross fifteenth-century mock-castle 'motivated by a passion for architecture, a colossal ego, and enormous ambition', but destined for confiscation after a failed plot to murder Pope Leo X (Partridge [1996] 66–68).

Rome may be in pieces, with gaping holes, too; but what has been found is in the very best condition for wear and tear. It has arms and hands a plenty, whole faces, and—a miracle in classical art—scarcely a nose chipped.⁵⁰ An *opus*, for all that, without a *sedes*; and, as such, impossible to evaluate in appropriate generic terms. For we have no especially good grounds for thinking them (e.g.) onto a wall, alongside each other, perhaps to flank a doorway, rather than, say, the opposite sides of the passage through another triumphal arch.⁵¹ They are the same height (though, archly or thoughtlessly, books regularly obscure this by using photographs that blow up what is left of Relief 'B' to match the length of 'A', or vice versa); and, as for length, 'A' just manages to preserve its original span intact, while it makes sense, at any rate, to presume that 'B' measured the same, with room at left only to complete the airborne Victory, and to supply the rest of the figure whose left leg rhymes with his fellow licitor beside Mars (figs 48–9). Both dimensions (height 2.06 m.; length 6.058 m.; figures near lifesize) are in fact very close to Titus' reliefs, and although these *could* be just two from a (far?) longer sequence of scenes, some long-lost 'altar base', perhaps, posh cladding for an imperial forum, or whatever, I shall make a modest case below for treating them as their like. At any rate, they *reward* a reading in 'confrontation' with each other (and their voluminous scholarship has shown precious little interest in this potential).

[3.2] We can be sure that this *is* Flavian art. Because—despite the absence of any surefire indications of an occasion in Roman history for either tableau⁵²—this *opus* has been defaced: the emperor of 'A' has undergone glyphic surgery, with an approximation to the face (and neck) of Nerva excavated from the original king's head (hence the weird hairline, and unsettling undersize). It can only be the best of a bad job, or botchery. But it points unerringly to an original promenade from *Domitian* (whose hairstyling would fit our monstified

⁵⁰ To be precise, 4 out of 34 noses are *missing*: Toynbee (1957) 13.

⁵¹ Toynbee (1957) 19 runs through several possibilities for the location, including an archway. Magi (1945) 134f. oddly dismissed an archway because of the panels' cornice. Darwall-Smith (1996) 176f. thinks an arch is the obvious *sedes*. Bonanno (1976) 60 produces arguments for 'two different sculptors even if the designer was the same for both reliefs'.

⁵² Ghedini (1986) 291–309 takes the best shot to date at tracking down an occasion or two for the panels, but cf. Hölscher (1992) 298 (off on his own quest).

Caesar's remnants).⁵³ On Relief 'B', we recognise the features of dear old Vespasian in the front-rank figure to right who is being crowned by a Victory launch. And we wonder if (we can ever decide if) the young man he is paired with has an individualised, or blankly idealising, visage:⁵⁴ a youthful Domitian, or some worthy public servant? A Domitian, some agree (*never*, in any event, a square-jaw Titus)—a princeling Domitian re-imag(in)ed in a two decades retrospect from the meat of his reign, and hence a Domitian unlike his former self? So Magi reckoned, and 'A' is thus pinpointed as the start or finale of some (major? enough to call for massive sculpture . . .) campaign under Domitian's auspices; while 'B' must be a contemporaneous resuscitation of an occasion way back in Vespasian's era—bringing together father and (second) son. If Nerva displaced the head on Domitian's neck in 'A', perhaps the dead and damned Domitian escaped defacement in 'B' *precisely* because he looks (so) little like Domitian? Proper inspection of Vespasian, however, has convinced several specialists that there is precious little to differentiate the surface working of the marble of *this* head, neck, and throat area from those tell-tale shifts to turn Domitian in his pomp into a half-decent Nerva. Suspicion applies equally here—and if the reliefs *are* contemporaries, we shall need to decide that Vespasian is supposititious, presumably ousting his cursed son Domitian;⁵⁵ so the young 'prince' has not lost his looks—but can never have been Domitian in the first place (and that could explain why *this* image has not been spoiled?). *Ex hypothesi*, now then, 'B' formerly drew the mature emperor Domitian close to some splendid Roman in the making, with five (perhaps all six) of the Vestal Virgins in ceremonial attendance;⁵⁶ but upon Nerva's accession, Vespasian replaced his assassinated son, and the parallel was risked between the spontaneously elevated good Caesars who inaugurated Rome's second and third

⁵³ For Nervas out of Domitians: Bergmann and Zanker (1981) 320f., 388, etc.

⁵⁴ His eyes bigger and deeper than the lictors', his face *more* individualised than theirs, at least (Simon [1960] 134; Bonanno [1976] 56).

⁵⁵ So esp. McCann (1972) 249–76 (on a suggestion of D. Thimme); refined by Bergmann (1981) 19–31. Cf. Bonanno (1976) 55f., unconvinced, but pointing out (p. 56) that only 'Vespasian' on 'B' lacks 'a short incised line underneath the lower eyelids'.

⁵⁶ These are our only large-scale representation of the Vestals (Magi [1945] 127). They could, but should not, be sent out to hail returning generals by senatorial decree: Lacey (1996) 40.

dynasties: Vespasian ~ Nerva. Magi would have none of it (and the present Vatican curators also demur), but decision on the status of the head of 'Vespasian' does seem to rest on a chisel-edge. If this *was* Vespasian all along, then this *could* commemorate his arrival before a reception committee at Rome, perhaps back in 70 CE when Domitian, who had been in the capital throughout the conflict(s), led the welcome of the newly victorious world-conqueror (sc., conqueror of the *Roman* world, in civil war). If so, a revisionist project designed to finesse (now apotheosed) Titus, and belatedly attest Vespasian's paternal blessing for the son that stood by Rome when the dynasty was hatching? But, if so, it is underdetermined, plagued by ill-fitting details,⁵⁷ and—perhaps unavoidably—short on specifics (no triumphal paraphernalia, nothing like that Candlestick; and, of course, we have no monument, so no dedicatory inscription).

[3.3] However fortuitously, these context-deprived commemorations still contrive to immortalise the Flavians as dynasty. From first to last a flash in the pan, the blip between the families of Augustus and Nerva where a generation got lost, but no distance was ever accomplished from the inception. The Cancellaria Reliefs may bring us near to zero referentiality within the political-religious-military theatres of the Roman empire, but they tell all on these failing Flavians. Besides casting every imaginable Caesar into deepest shadow. Just think: Statius' Roman Forum knew full well to mutter that one all-powerful bronze neck had managed to swap imperial heads, Alexander for Caesar (what's the deal?).⁵⁸ Now the masons—on commission, or trying it on?—bent with the wind, chopped and changed emperors in a bid to save stone. The investment in marble and in craftsmanship was worth more than a monarch's identity. Whether or not the panels had been fixed through their dowel- and clamp-holes ('B' and 'A' respectively) to their monument is unclear. Re-carving may have been attempted *in situ*, or were they taken down, for overhaul in some sculptor's repair shop? Did news of Nerva's ascension interrupt, when 'A' was irrevocably pared down to capture him, and 'B' was either made over, too, or else was in no need of surgery since Vespasian had become good news once more, for a short season,

⁵⁷ Why does the youth have simple (non-senatorial) shoes, no ring, and a wispy beardlet? (e.g., Bergmann [1981] 26–7)

⁵⁸ On ancient re-use of portrait statues: Hannestad (1994) 13f. and n. 2.

anyhow?⁵⁹ Wherever thoughts turn, the business of conferring eternity upon a Caesar through public statements in massive masonry throws up ramifying ironies: a geriatric's coronation meant a bonanza, a boost in store for sheer turnover. And *damnatio memoriae* imposed on an eliminated ruler was a monumental headache—a heady mix of hackwork with craftwork, defacement and replacement. Every chance that re-conditioning would bomb, and immense input of labour and love head for the scrapyard.⁶⁰ Such were the grandiose calculations that weighed the unique referential power of the imperial portrait over against the traditional rites and ceremonies of Rome, and their permanent and ever-renewed celebration against the celestial skyline.

[3.4] For if the *melodrama* of these Reliefs pivots around those fragile necklines, which trumpet that Nerva and Domitian, Domitian and Vespasian, Domitian and any budding Roman, are not so far apart that they cannot share bodywork, nevertheless these are but details in a symbolic map of the Roman cultural order, a system far antedating the Caesars: 'A' lines up the legions, behind traditional personifications of 'SPQR'⁶¹ and the tutelary gods of the capital—Mars, Minerva, and (?) Roma. And lictors, who guarded every magistrate the republic ever had, lead the time-honoured way to (unbroken) Victory. 'B' ushers in an official who is already being crowned victor, surrounded by more lictors and those personifications of SPQR again, and, covered by their dogsbody attendant and by the goddess Roma, half a dozen dedicated servants of the sacred flame of Rome without end fall into line—'thirty years of sanctity' each.⁶² Historical contextualisation does elude us, but here is Flavian memorialisation of a world which has not the slightest need to have, or remember, the Flavians. *Par operi sedes*: 'Rome' is the worthwhile theme.⁶³

[3.5] Scholars dispute whether Relief 'A' organises departure or arrival; perhaps they needn't, since these complementary scenarios

⁵⁹ Cf. Toynbee (1957) 20.

⁶⁰ Cf. Hedrick (2000) 89–130, 'Remembering to forget: the *damnatio memoriae*', for the line that damnation meant dishonour not oblivion.

⁶¹ The most painstaking attempt to pin these figures to names, with tabulation of critics' divergences to date: Keller (1967) 193–217, esp. 216–17.

⁶² Davis (1999) 37; with 163, on their 'notoriously cocky' lictor apiece.

⁶³ Staples (1998) esp. 130 argues that Vestals were apart from society, representing no single ritual category, and so able to represent the whole: (Somehow) 'In a ritual sense the Vestals *were* Rome'.

match up in the circuit of imperial success—so ‘advent’ serves ‘both as a providential precondition and as a ceremonial conclusion’.⁶⁴ And we have seen how dubious the ‘topic’ of ‘B’ remains. But worthwhile ‘artistic’ returns need not depend helplessly on denotation. If we think one of the reliefs through another left/right reversal, *pace* the usual side-by-side photographic presentation in books, and imagine them as directly *facing* each other, then the Reliefs will indeed find an ‘apt setting for their design’. In reciprocity. Thus, the brace of Victories rhyme in ‘adjacent’ top corners. Each soars above a pair of terrestrial power-signs, the lictors. ‘Vespasian’ twins with Mars and Minerva, over against their ‘princes’, Domitian/Nerva and ‘the young Domitian/the budding Roman’. The triad of embodiments of Rome, the goddess Roma plus the two personifications of SPQR, hold the centreground of ‘A’, but are reserved, in reverse order, for the back row ‘above and behind’ the action of ‘B’. Finally, ‘A’ uses the pivoting figure of an officer to cordon off the unstoppable force of the Roman army; where ‘B’ positions one lictor on the spot from which Roma backed up her prince, while another pivots round to bracket off the immovable object of those keepers of Rome’s eternal flame, the Vestals.

[3.6] This binary interplay sets up Rome as a dynamical system. But is the diptych a work-out for Roman *Art*? Scholars regularly contrast the reliefs: ‘A’ a toned-down version of the pulsating rhythm of the Flavian illusionism supposedly perfected beneath the Arch of Titus (fig. 50); ‘B’ a static and hieratic flattening of relief into an undemonstrative classicism akin to the Ara Pacis and to its successors and revivalists in second-century modes (Trajanic? Hadrianic? Antonine? Opinions, and narratives, differ, and proliferate: fig. 51).⁶⁵ The second tier in ‘B’ is often fingered, not always for disdain, as harbinger of that irritation in ‘later’ Roman relief, increasing distance represented by ascension up the picture plane. Moreover, Roma is sat on her throne with full profile head at an unmitigated tangent to frontal torso, she is an oddity in any case, since as yet, she had no temple cult in Rome (no *sedes*),⁶⁶ and when Vestals form a

⁶⁴ Brilliant (1994) 380f.; cf. Ryberg (1967) 33: ‘the basic parallelism of the two themes’.

⁶⁵ The diagrams and interpretation of Magi (1945) esp. 145, 156f., 163 have not been bettered.

⁶⁶ Keller (1967) 198–205; Vermeule (1959) pl. 10.

bodyguard-cum-human shield between her and her Caesars, the composition has gone bizarrely frigid. Again, whereas the older, bearded, personification must be the giant on the block, his younger mate is carefully provided with some sort of plinth, but simultaneously steps up with his left leg, and yet already stands aloft (his right leg AWOL?).⁶⁷ A good many critical eyes have feasted on these *faux pas*, but that is just blind—wooden—prejudice! The first pay-off for treating the reliefs as if we knew they were from/for an archway is, precisely, to point up the fitness of their stylistics for eliciting meaningful difference between their themes.

* Relief 'B' uses the vertical for ontology: superhumans aloft in the gallery, mortals posing downstairs. The trinity of personifications is widely separated, reinforcing and intensifying the block of stares from the Vestals, trained along the plane on the grand figure of Vespasian/Domitian. Rigid frontality immobilises all these statuesque humans, but that smuggles in a minimum of lateral pressure, concentrated in the pivotal figure who confronts the Vestal picket, and his rhyme, the licitor who supports Domitian/Vespasian. The message: no one climbs down, nobody gives ground. This is brokerage, not confrontation: the city is defended by its strange cohorts of ungods and unwomen: impassively passive, there to stay, and stay put. And on parade here is diplomacy, taking the wind out of all sails. So it is that a mimetic regime which turns tutelary personifications into 'statues' (on a throne like a cult image, on a plinth like a bronze) aptly stresses the adamantine impregnability of the Vestals, untouchable as any cult statue stood in any temple. While the staff still look lively enough to be busy little humans, Victory leaps like a basketball player with a ballerina's points (no doubt looking very much like another statue—of Victory: fig. 52).⁶⁸ As for the royal pair, they play book-ends, for all the world just like a marble group in some imperial dedication! . . .

* In Relief 'A', an energetically illusionist poetics turns all this round. Here is Rome lined up fully behind its saviour's every step. Army discipline holds the men easy, the civvy mini-deities of SPQR link up and wave support; off at the head of the column, the gods pitch in bodily. This is no time for reserve, the gods come down to put a spring in the generalissimo's heroic step. Roma first, covering his left side, lending a helping hand along the way. Matched by another virgin with crested helm, Minerva, getting her captain on the road. Side by side with Mars, hustling in hot pursuit of Victory for Rome. Here,

⁶⁷ Giant: Bonanno (1976) 52. Step up: Magi (1945) 147, 167; cf. Toynbee (1957) 5; McCann (1972) 268. These are *not* bodies like yours or mine.

⁶⁸ Magi (1945) 32 fig. 36, 167 found the poetry of his papal panels in Victory's left foot; cf. Hölscher (1967) esp. 48 67: 'Victoria bei *Adventus* und *Profectio*'.

Domitian/Nerva *is*, in return, one of the gods, at one with them, and their size, too.⁶⁹ This myth hems the hero in with unwomen warriors, but the massive god of war pledges that *manliness* (*uirtus*) brings Roman success. Here there is no check or counterbalance to the weight of serried ranks that bulge out toward the viewer from the centre of the relief. This is a stylistics of action, aggression engendered. These soldiers make unconvincing waxworks; the three personifications all *use* their right arms. Through Minerva and Mars, the emperor transmits a single long-range collective power-gesture pointing out to himself the way forward, reaching out to a Roman future of Victory.⁷⁰ Whatever event could account for the *mélange*, we should reflect here that a Domitianic Mars cheekpiece-by-jowl with Minerva points, if we let it, to one very specific 'setting to match artwork'. For Domitian built the precinct to the Temple of Minerva that would be completed as the Forum of Nerva, squeezed in next to the Augustan precinct for the Temple of Mars Ultor. A colossal statue of Mars (3.60 m. tall) was found between the two precincts, is reckoned Flavian, and often recognised as a Domitianic substitute for the Augustan cult statue.⁷¹ Minerva's strange lifting of her arm to her nape, *somewhat* like the Minerva of the Capitoline triad as she is represented on coins and a relief,⁷² *could* allude to the pose of a Domitianic cult-image for his new Forum.⁷³ As we noticed, the one-hero convoy may either be off to war or back from it: in either case, a visit to Mars Ultor was what that Forum had been laid out for: *par operi sedes*. All told, 'A' sets Flavian excitement to animate the range of statues that guard, guide, and fight for Rome. And (naturally) this includes the full-length Caesar portrait in polished marble. . . .

[3.7] So these Roman reliefs turn people into stone, and stone into people. Turn and turn about. Sounds like ART. And they make so much mileage from their daring proxemics. All this weight of numbers foregathers in bravura shows of solidarity and strength (rows, concatenations, overlap . . .). And yet, they so restrict physical *contact*. So many hands are full, bearing lances, shields, or fasces, fingering

⁶⁹ Without precedent in previous Roman art: Hölscher (1992) 305.

⁷⁰ Cf. esp. Ghedini (1986) 292f. On the matrix of possibilities for 'the gesture of demonstration' (Brecht): Gandelman (1991) 14–35.

⁷¹ LIMC 2.1 Mars 515 no. 24a; cf. D'Ambra (1993) 26 and n. 38.

⁷² LIMC 2.1. Minerva 282, 288, 289; cf. Simon (1960) 144 fig. 7; Ryberg (1967) 25. A replacement for the razed Capitoline Temple of I. O. M. was the first priority of Vespasian's reign, and Titus, then Domitian, had to rebuild after the fire of 80 CE: Darwall-Smith (1996) 43–5, 96–7, 105–10.

⁷³ A headless Minerva still stood in the pediment in the Twelfth Century (Magister Gregorius, *cit.* Rushforth [1919] 30). Domitian's temples for Minerva: Darwall-Smith (1996) 115.

hilt and cornucopias. But sometimes, one robot does reach out to another, and touch/ing occurs. As we saw at the Arch of Titus, the vital gestures are generally damaged beyond visualisation, let alone visibility. But these Cancelleria Reliefs were left carefully propped against the wall of a tomb (of the late republican consul and casualty Hirtius), business side tucked in, and safely buried in Tiber mud sooner than later in Antiquity. Their surfaces are uncorroded and unvandalised. True, the right hand fingers of Domitian and Mars are damaged on 'A'. But this does not inhibit full response to the crucial row of arm signals relayed along the line of superhumans. And we can focus on Minerva's unimpaired 'noli me tangere' gesture,⁷⁴ which can look so much like some form of repudiation for Domitian, especially in contrast with Roma's muscular helping hand to the emperor's left. A discomfiting effect that is redoubled by the (excessive?) distance between their heads, *prima facie* in tension with what we easily take for their mutual gaze. And this is the heart of the chiasmus that arranges the whole cast around goddess and emperor. As just speculated, a specific cultic motivation may be at work. But, once more, beware of leaping into static frontal 'photographic' response to relief sculpture. Otherwise your Minerva will forever elbow Mars on the chin! And we can understand better how these body signals function, and malfunction, than scholars once knew to.

* First, we can learn from social semiotic scholarship that proximity requires disambiguation if solidarity is not to blur with menace, affection with invasion. Here, as in the Christian 'Annunciation' schema, bodily signals play off body orientation against gaze, play with clothing or accessories vs. body posture, and (we could put it) play up *opus ~ sedes*.⁷⁵ So Minerva's gesture challenges the viewer to interpret, *without* the security of code.⁷⁶ If her raised arm looks like a species of pudibund womanliness,⁷⁷ overdone because Domitian's manly arm thrusts perilously close to her aegis, then this is deference to his *uirtus*; but it *also* evokes her inviolable virginity, and to draw attention to her head,

⁷⁴ Barasch (1987) 169–82 (on Giotto).

⁷⁵ Hodge and Kress (1988) 52–67: 'Ideology and bodies in space' (on S. Martini, *The Annunciation*).

⁷⁶ Beard (2000b) 265–79.

⁷⁷ The (matron's) *pudicitia* gesture: Brilliant (1963) 49f. In the Capitoline triad awaiting the *triumphator* on Trajan's Arch at Benevento, Minerva fingers her Gorgon while Juno rests her hand on the folds beside her bosom. (Townside, left attic relief: Hassel [1966]: Tafel 14)

reinforced through their strong eye-contact, is to underline that Minerva's bond with her protégé is through *mental* inspiration, not physical. Then again, no one should forget for a moment that this virgin can be a killer: she does not finger a tremulous hem, but twiddles *with her helmet* (she is, then, a 'think-tank'). Mind Minerva on the war-path. Worth avoiding.⁷⁸

* Second, all the descriptions I have ventured for this 'gestural area'⁷⁹ are necessarily tendentious, since they must shift and alter in the dioramic relief, and prompt other recognitions, other responses. Moving back/on to Relief 'B', touch is a rarity. The licitor behind 'Vespasian' stretches his right hand gently behind his Caesar's rump: protective, perhaps, not pushy? Yet, as I claimed, this lackey's trajectory does edge Vespasian/Domitian closer still to the young Roman before him. At the head of the whole line of most resistance. In short, everything is conspiring to put pressure on that gesture of the emperor's right hand, behind the young man's left shoulder. Maybe the men hold their bodies in check, confining response to communication through the eyes? Both the young man's hands are decorously occupied with *his* toga hems, badge of his civic propriety. So there is not a flicker to be seen—from face, arms, posture. Thus the entire drama is concentrated in the micro-environment of that 'hand on the shoulder'—in greeting? Benediction? Wonderment? Comradely devotion? Appointment to office? What *should* we 'see' here? . . .⁸⁰ Now we cannot wish away the problem of identifying these hombres, and so the relationship between them, for the gesture arises from, as well as feeding into, exactly that! But for myself, the twinned left arms and symmetrical bodily stance assure me that this gesture is one that reduces contact to a minimum. Diagnosing a powerful display of the refusal to utilise power, I tell myself I observe here the workings of *tact*. Those all-too adjacent forearms are held *in parallel*; these lines, these wires, these wills, need never cross.

4

'Domitian Caesar!', gasped Rutilius, absolutely thrilled.

(Lindsey Davis [(2000) 11] again)

⁷⁸ Magi (1945) 103, 150–3, thought it was inane formalism—a huntress Diana drawing an arrow from her quiver (his repressed id is bursting to get out here!). Toynbee (1957) 13 projects away: 'Minerva has just put on her helmet, and is 'patting' the neckguard into place'. . . .

⁷⁹ Beard (2000b) 265–79.

⁸⁰ Bergmann (1981) 28 and n. 49 for more descriptions/interpretations. Plenty of 'patting' survives on the panels of Trajan's Arch at Benevento: Minerva's right hand rests on Hadrian's right shoulder as he defers to Trajan before him—in commendation, perhaps? (Townside, right attic: Hassel [1966]: Tafel 15)

Lyrical Statius can no more 'typify' Flavian-style viewing of art than any set of reliefs can deliver its culture some totalised *Kunstwollen*. And though heavy 'contextualisation' is the only way to bring specific art projects home to us, the medium of Roman archway reliefs has its own in-built take on what/how to see. In the 'diorama' of high relief, one view will always shade in and out of another, in loose impressionist moments of 'I, here, now' that anyone can explore, or forget. Flavians flew or fell, Caesars conquered and converted. Somehow Flavian style became, for an instant that self-deleted as it occurred, but marked indelibly a century of study—an enthusiasm for shadows and depth. And Roman Art became a place to watch, and watch out for, (Visual) Theory.⁸¹

⁸¹ My thanks for help from Rolf Schneider. Elsner (forthcoming) reached me too late: it would have improved my whole chapter.

9. CONTAINMENT AND CORRUPTION: THE DISCOURSE OF FLAVIAN EMPIRE

Rhiannon Evans

For Flavian rulers, the relationship between emperor and the acquisition of empire was particularly strong: Vespasian's nomination depended upon his military reputation and actual success in Judaea (Suet. *Vesp.* 6);¹ similarly much of Titus' popularity was accrued during his military service in Britain, Germany and Judaea,² while Domitian is represented as an emperor desperately trying to extend the bounds of empire (Suet. *Dom.* 2.1, 6.1).³ But while it was the much-derided victory in Germany that Domitian chose to celebrate and attach to his own name, the greatest territorial expansion and scope for rhetorical flourish occurred across the Ocean in Britain.⁴

Britain was the most northerly point ever conquered by Rome and it took over a hundred years to subjugate the island: from Caesar's initial skirmishes with the Britons in 54 BCE, to the defeat of the Caledonians in 84 CE by the Roman general, Agricola. During this period, Roman interest in geography and graphic representations of the world exploded: the first known Roman map of the world was planned by Iulius Caesar;⁵ the project was later researched by Agrippa and a map was set up in the Porticus Vipsania. Another Augustan project, the Forma Urbis, which mapped the city of Rome, was updated in the reign of Vespasian and placed in the library of Vespasian's own Temple of Peace. It seems reasonable that the temple housed a second library containing a similarly updated map of the world.⁶ Certainly the presence of the city map indicates that the

¹ See Levick (1999) 53–4.

² Britain and Germany: Suet. *Tit.* 4.1; Judaea: Suet. *Tit.* 5.2. On Titus' early career, see Jones (1984) 14–15.

³ See Jones (1992) 16–19, 131–2.

⁴ Braund (1996) 149 points out that, by 77 CE, 'Caledonia had become the objective, the remaining field for excellence'.

⁵ See Nicolet (1991) 95–8.

⁶ As noted by Dudley (1967) 131. For the probable layout of the Temple and libraries, see Richardson (1992) 287.

Augustan interest in the control of space through mapping⁷ was still being pursued in the Flavian era. The geographical display of empire would highlight the status of Britain—often described as *ultima*—at the very edge of the *orbis terrarum*.⁸

To emphasise its remoteness, Britain was often referred to as ‘Caledonia’, technically the northern part of Britain; or, even more often, it was called ‘Thule’.⁹ Thule was a mystery place off the north coast of Caledonia—definitely *not* in the *orbis terrarum*: supposedly it sported the midnight sun, probably no humans, but many prodigies (*miracula*; Serv. 1.30). Roman geographers disputed its existence¹⁰ and commentators are still wondering about Thule’s identity.¹¹ For the Romans ‘Thule’ became a mythical ‘point beyond’ all else, a way of describing the most remote locus.¹² The elision of Britain and Thule was more than a convenient metrical variant for Roman poets—it also encapsulated the concept that Britain was fabulously remote, mystically unreal and beyond the bounds of knowledge. It

⁷ See Nicolet (1991) esp. 95–122.

⁸ Britannia as a far off place is standard as early as the late republic: see Catull. 11.11: *ultimosque Britannos* (‘the most remote Britons’); Catull. 29.4: *ultima Britannia* (‘remotest Britain’); Diodorus Siculus (5.21.2; cf. 5.24.2–3) cites Britain as the one region never invaded by Greek heroes: ἄντη δὲ τὸ μὲν παλαιὸν ἀνεπίμικτος ἐγένετο ξενικαῖς δυνάμεσιν· οὔτε γὰρ Διόνυσον οὔθ’ Ἡρακλέα παρελήφαμεν οὔτε τῶν ἄλλων ἥρώων ἐστρατευμένον ἐπ’ αὐτήν (‘In ancient times this place was not visited by foreign armies; for tradition tells us that neither Dionysos nor Herakles nor any other hero made a campaign against it’); Hor. *Carm.* 1.35.29–30: *in ultimos orbis Britannos* (‘against the Britons, the most remote of the earth’); Hor. *Carm.* 4.14.47–8: *remotis . . . Britannis* (‘the distant Britons’); Virg. *Ecl.* 1.66: *toto diuisos orbe Britannos* (‘the Britons, cut off from the whole world’); Martial (11.3.5) implies that Britain is the most remote place with an awareness of his poetry: *dicatur et nostros cantare Britannia uersus* (‘even Britain is said to sing our lines’).

⁹ See Wijsman (1998) 318–20 on the use of ‘Thule’ to indicate Britain. Henderson (1984) 28 discusses the possible etymological relationship between the Caledonian Boresti and the fantastically remote Hyperboreans. As Romm (1992) 141 explains, Britain could also be seen as *outside* of the *orbis terrarum*, in another world, outside of Roman experience and contact, as Virg. *Ecl.* 1.66, Flor. *Epit.* 1.45.16.

¹⁰ A Greek traveller, Pytheas (c. 200 BCE), claimed it was an island near a solid ice sea—but he is ridiculed by Strabo (1.4.2–4). Mela records Thule as the land of the midnight sun (3.57), while Pliny simply reports it as the most remote island beyond Britain (*HN* 4.104).

¹¹ Ogilvie and Richmond (1967) 172 argue for a shifting identity: the name ‘Thule’ probably refers to Shetland for Tacitus, but to Iceland in earlier writers.

¹² As discussed by Romm (1992) 157, Thule had a long history of being ‘perceived but not approachable’. Polybius even claimed that Thule was in an area where distinctions of land, sea and air no longer existed but that all combined so that it was ‘like a jellyfish’ (τῷ πλεῦμονι ἐοικός), which made access impossible (34.5.2–4).

was also a final destination for empire: 'May farthest Thule be your slave' wrote Virgil to Augustus (*tibi seruiat ultima Thyle*, *Georg.* 1.30).

To conquer Thule was, then, to take possession of the ends of the earth and grasp the limits of geographical understanding; this would make a reality of Jupiter's prophecy in the *Aeneid* that Romans will achieve 'empire without end' (*imperium sine fine*, 1.279). While Virgil may have expressed the wish that Augustus would achieve such glory, it was patently obvious that the first *princeps* had done no such thing: he had not even attempted to conquer Britain. But Vespasian had made his name there in the invasion of 43 ce¹³ and the most northerly conquest took place under his son Domitian. In a direct reference to Virgil's prophetic speech, Silius Italicus has Jupiter foresee its fulfilment at the four compass points by Vespasian:¹⁴

hinc pater ignotam donabit uincere Thylen
inque Caledonios primus trahet agmina lucos;
compescet ripis Rhenum, reget impiger Afros
palmiferamque senex bello domitabit Idymen.

(Silius Italicus, *Punica* 3.597–600)

From [the Flavians] the father will allow [Rome] to conquer *unknown Thule* and he will be the first to haul an army into Caledonian forests; he will restrain the Rhine with banks, tireless, he will rule the Africans and, as an old man, he will subdue palm-bearing Judaea by war.

The act of invading is made equivalent to the act of making Britain intelligible;¹⁵ in addition, conquering and knowing this land is the

¹³ A period of service for which he received the triumphal regalia and two priest-hoods (Suet. *Vesp.* 3.2). As Braund (1996) 147 comments, the Claudian conquest of Britain could be effectively represented by Flavian propagandists (e.g., Joseph. *BJ* 3.3–5; see Levick [1999] 16) as Vespasian's own achievement, while, at the same time, a recovery of interest in Britain fitted with the Flavian emperor's recuperation of Claudius (such as the completion of the Temple of the Divine Claudius).

¹⁴ In temporal terms, Silius seems to be referring to Vespasian's part in the Claudian invasion, though the conquest of the far north is much more appropriate for Agricola's victory after Vespasian's death (Braund [1996] 150). The significance of Vespasian's direct role in Britain is not lost on Tacitus, who highlights it (*Agr.* 13.3) and points to these events as crucial in throwing Vespasian to the fore (*monstratus fatis Vespasianus*, 'Vespasian was marked out by destiny'). Vespasian's activities in Britain make him a participant in Agricola's narrative, and it is appropriate that it is Vespasian who returns the province to stable government under Cerialis and eventually appoints Agricola (*Agr.* 17).

¹⁵ 'To govern territories, one must know them' (Edney [1997] 1). There is a long tradition of connecting knowledge with imperial conquest and control; often a *lack* of geographical knowledge restricts the spread of empire: see Caes. *B Gal.* 5.1.8; Sal. *Iug.* 53.1, 75.1, 79.1 and 92.5, on which see Kraus (1997) 22.

test and the proof of Vespasian's claim to the principate. This claim was dubious—Vespasian had no links with the Julio-Claudian dynasty that had reigned for ninety-five years. Silius' Jupiter makes explicit that the Flavian dynasty, founded by Vespasian, has exceeded the achievements of Augustus' line: 'a warrior family shall increase the fame of the deified Julii' (*sacris augebit nomen Iulis/bellatrix gens, Pun.* 3.595–6).

If Britain could validate a Flavian emperor, it could also make the career of a young aristocrat. Statius suggests that a sixteen year old boy, Crispinus, complete his education with military service: 'To which of Caesar's worlds will you go?' he asks (*quem Caesaris ibis in orbem?*, *Silv.* 5.2.132). By the mid-nineties 'Caesar' is Domitian and the suggestion that he has many worlds to his empire again works to bolster the Flavian claim to power. Britain looks like the lucky province for Crispinus' debut: his father had been governor of Britain in the early 70s CE and Statius writes that the son must imitate the paternal model: *tu discas patrem, quantusque negantem . . . Thylen intrarit mandata gerens* ('you learn from your father how great a man . . . bearing orders, entered Thule', *Silv.* 5.2.54–6). The poet imagines the scene when Crispinus arrives:

quanta Caledonios attolet gloria campos,
cum tibi longaeus referet trucidis incola terrae:
'hic suetus dare iura parens, hoc caespitem turmas
adfari; quas hinc speculas castellaque longe
aspicis ille dedit, cinxitque haec moenia fossa;
belligeris haec dona deis, haec tela dicavit
(cernis adhuc titulos); hunc ipse uocantibus armis
induit, hunc regi rapuit thoraca Britanno.'

(Statius, *Silvae* 5.2.142–9)

What glory will raise up the Caledonian fields,
When some aged native of that savage land recalls:
'Here your father used to administer justice; on this mound
he used to address the troops; from here you can see far away
the watchtowers and fortifications that he placed,
and he surrounded this wall with a ditch;
he dedicated these gifts, these weapons to the battle gods
(you can still make out the inscriptions); he himself put on this breastplate
when the battle summoned and he tore this one from a British king.'

Crispinus' father, Bolanus, is imagined as an efficient and pious leader. He encourages his troops, manages engineering tasks, and

does his duty by the gods; twenty-five years later the grateful Britons are still extolling his breastplate-ripping talents. Is this really what Flavian poets imagined was going on at the edges of empire? Like the legendary Thule, which Bolanus is supposed to have reached (though he never even got close to Scotland), this is an idealisation of imperial administration. In keeping with this rose-tinted view, Bolanus is active in his acquisition of knowledge about his province: on his campaign he 'knows beforehand' (*praenosce*) the perils of the route, 'searches for' (*quaerere*) the ridge that will keep the army safe and 'measures out the fields' (*metiri agros*; *Silv.* 5.2.41–3). Investigation and invasion again go hand in hand.

Military mapping in fact had a strong historical precedent in Caesar's notebooks on his war in Gaul. Caesar began by dividing up a province that did not yet exist: *Gallia omnis in tres partes diuisa est* ('The whole of Gaul is divided into three parts', *Gal.* 1.1]). The act of mapping and drawing boundaries effectively enacts empire—it creates the coherent landscape that Caesar can then enter and subdue. It was during this ten-year stay in Gaul that Caesar sailed to southern Britain and began to exact tribute from the natives.¹⁶ There was not yet a province beyond the Northern Sea and though Claudius created one eighty-six years later, control effectively ended in central England. For Rome this was a geographical problem: no one had ever sailed around Britain—was it an island at all? Africa had caused similar problems to the south—did it run on forever, an unstoppable and uncontainable expanse of land (*Mela* 3.89)? The root of the word 'continent' is the Latin verb *continere*—'to keep in', 'surround', 'restrain'. Proving the 'restrainability' of Britain was both a military and geographical mission, one of such importance that Tacitus wrote a biography of the governor who achieved it: his father-in-law, Gnaeus Iunius Agricola.

Although published early in Trajan's rule, the *Agricola* is in every respect a Flavian text: the bulk of its narrative concerns the period 77–84 CE. Just as Tacitus' outlook was shaped during the Flavian period—he was a senator under Vespasian, praetor under Domitian—so the *Agricola* is *the* text on Flavian imperialism par excellence. Overtly

¹⁶ At this point, Britain seems to have had a very shadow existence in the ancient geographical imagination: Plutarch mentions rumours that Caesar had invented the existence of Britain (*Caes.* 23.2).

a biography,¹⁷ this text demonstrates the collision between the fortunes of individual and empire in this era—much as they coincided to produce Vespasian's accession. Tacitus insists that conquest and mapping make the text *possible*: he *has to* describe Britain, because only under Agricola was Roman knowledge of the province made complete, only by him was it absolutely dominated:

tum primum perdomita est; ita quae priores nondum comperta eloquentia percoluere, rerum fide tradentur . . . hanc oram nouissimi maris tunc primum Romana classis circumuecta insulam esse Britanniam affirmavit, ac simul incognitas ad id tempus insulas, quas Orcadas uocant, inuenit domuitque.

(Tacitus, *Agricola* 10.1, 4)

Then for the first time it was completely tamed; so what my predecessors did not yet know and dressed up with rhetorical style, will now be reported with certainty. . . . Then, for the first time, a Roman fleet circumnavigating that shore of the furthest sea established the fact that Britain was an island and simultaneously discovered and tamed those islands, which they call the Orkneys.

Previous writers have embraced empty *eloquentia* ('rhetorical style'), while truth, collected by imperial expansion, can now be expressed in language—an equation emblematic of Agricola's life and Tacitus' writing of it: the laudatory biography stands in stark contrast to the lies put about by Domitian's sinister agents (*Agr.* 41.1). By circumnavigation, Agricola comprehends the *forma* of the whole island and dominates the land itself. Roman mapping often encompasses a highly pictorial element and Britain had been described by earlier writers as shaped like an 'elongated shoulder-blade' (*oblongae scapulae*)¹⁸ or an 'axe' (*bipennis*). Tacitus tells us that *Fama* had extended this shape to the whole island; but, this does not take into account the previously unknown Caledonia, which is 'a huge and shapeless tract of lands running to the furthest shore'. The word for 'shapeless' (*enorme*) is the antithesis of the *forma* ('form') that Agricola is able to supply: he

¹⁷ This is the general consensus, although the generic debate is ongoing. For Sherwin-White (1967) 49 it is unproblematically a history; Dihle (1988) 42–52 argues that the *Agricola* is the earliest historical biography, while Petersmann (1991) 1805–6 reads it as a discourse on morality and politics rather than biography. It has also been seen as a funerary laudation (Pigon [1987] 465–6). The geographical and ethnographic elements of the work are seen as incongruous intrusions, e.g., Dorey (1969a) 8.

¹⁸ I follow the textual emendations of Ogilvie and Richmond (1967) 168–70 here.

discovers that Caledonia reassuringly 'tapers out like a wedge' (*uelut in cuneum tenuatur*, *Agr.* 10.3): form and order are imposed upon the chaotic mass of land.¹⁹ But we must never forget that the instrument of this control is Agricola himself, who, in his rousing before-the-crucial-battle speech is made to say:

ergo egressi, ego ueterum legatorum, uos priorum exercituum terminos, finem Britanniae non fama nec rumore, sed castris et armis tenemus.
(Tacitus, *Agricola* 33.3)

Therefore I have gone beyond the bounds of former legates and you have gone beyond the bounds of previous armies; and we possess the limits of Britain, not by rumour and hearsay, but by military camps and weapons.

Tacitus plays on the dual meaning of the verb *tenere* ('to hold, possess', 'to know') in order to stress the connection between conquest and knowledge.²⁰

Disclosure and Containment

In effect, there are two forces at work in the conquest of this island—the conceptual conquest, accomplished by circumnavigation, and the military victory over the natives; this victory is continually described as *disclosure*. The invading force is involved in the exposure of the occluded natives:²¹ 'The third year of campaigning *uncovered* new peoples' (*tertius expeditionum annus nouas gentes aperuit*, *Agr.* 22.1).²² And after

¹⁹ An important parallel, the rhetorical use of *informis* ('shapeless') in the *Germania* is discussed by O'Gorman (1993) 136.

²⁰ Also note *Agr.* 38.4 and 39.3, where *tenere* ('to hold') and *obtinere* ('to have power over') are found in similar contexts.

²¹ The combination of revelation and the acquisition of knowledge about Britain is strongly reminiscent of Mela's words on Claudius' invasion of 43 CE: *Britannia qualis sit qualesque progeneret mox certiora et magis explorata dicentur. quippe tamdiu clausam aperit ecce principium maximus* ('As to the nature of Britain and what kind of men it brings forth more secure and better investigated information will soon be available, since the greatest of leaders is opening up this place so long closed', 3.49). Again, the increase in geographic and ethnographic data is generated by military action and aperture.

²² Disclosure of newly discovered native peoples is dependent upon the destruction (literally 'emptying out') of others here, as the sentence continues: *uastatis usque ad Taum . . . nationibus* ('after the tribes up to the Tay had been devastated', *Agr.* 22.1). Armed warfare and the opening up of knowledge about foreign peoples is

initial success, the Roman army clamours to infiltrate and find the very edge of Britain:

exercitus . . . penetrandum Caledoniam inueniendumque tandem Britanniae terminum continuo proeliorum cursu fremebant.

(Tacitus, *Agricola* 27.1)

the army was shouting out that Caledonia must be penetrated and that the limit of Britain must finally be discovered in one continuous campaign.

Intrusion, exploration, the search for the furthest parameters, and the accumulation of data fuse in the mission to pacify northern Britain.²³ In literally penetrating Britain, Rome will both conquer and feminise the land and its inhabitants. At the same time, circumnavigation is essential and this too is infused with sexual language as the Roman commander 'embraced the tribes across the Bodotria' (*amplexus ciuitates trans Bodotriam sitas*, 25.1). Control of knowledge and space is vital and involves both revelation and containment: by compelling Britain to open up its secrets to the knowledge-seeking invader, conquest is made possible; by enclosing the natives' accustomed spaces and controlling access to them, power over them is established.

Empire and the Individual

The text of the *Agricola* is in many senses a monument to the conqueror of the furthest limits of space; for Flavian military leaders, both Crispinus and Agricola, Britain is a space in which mapping

also highlighted in the first sentence of the *Germania* (another Tacitean text published in the wake of Flavian rule): *nuper cognitis quibusdam gentibus ac regibus, quos bellum aperuit* ('recently certain peoples and kings, whom war has revealed, have become known', *Germ.* 1.1).

²³ *Penetrare* is a verb particularly connected with entering Britain *bis penetrata Britannia* ('Britain twice entered', Vell. Pat. 2.47.1), or other lands at the far reaches of the Roman world: *praeter Armeniam penetrat ad Tigrin* ('beyond Armenia he penetrated as far as the Tigris', Curt. 4.9.14); also Media and Scythia (Luc. 8.216) and Atlas Mountains (Plin. *NH* 5.11). For the sexual connotations compare Catullus' use of *penetrare* to describe voyaging to distant lands (at the four compass points of the empire) in a poem that turns aggressively sexual (Catull. 11.2, 20). This verb can also convey the admittance of certain concepts or aspects of culture into foreign territory: *in prouincias . . . grammatica penetrauerat* ('the study of grammar had penetrated into the provinces', Suet. *Gram.* 3.6), a reminder of Agricola's project to colonise by cultural assimilation (Tac. *Agr.* 21.1–2, discussed below).

and domination create the coloniser's reputation. But, in both cases, there is a strong sense that only those morally appropriate will achieve the imperial dream.

Statius stresses at length that the sixteen-year-old Crispinus is of distinguished patrician and senatorial stock. However, his father is dead and this raises the possibility that young Crispinus may be easily corrupted—there is no one to restrain the dangerous freedom of youth (*Silv.* 5.2.64–70). Even worse, the boy has no mother, but a stereotypical stepmother, who has actually tried to poison him (76–80). But all this poses no problem for our future scourge of Britain—he has so much modesty, restraint and integrity that he has overcome these unfortunate circumstances and even been honoured with early military office by the emperor (97–125). Statius stresses his personal qualities to reassure us that, despite early setbacks, Crispinus has a good future in imperialism.

Agricola, on the other hand, is prepared for his future role from birth: he comes from Massilia, a Greek colony in Gaul, described by Tacitus as the perfect balance of 'Greek refinement and provincial frugality' (*locum Graeca comitate et prouinciali parsimonia mixtum ac bene compositum*, *Agr.* 4.2). Healthily balanced between the extremes of sophistication and barbarity, the place itself acts as a primary educator. Moreover, Agricola is molded by a woman of 'rare chastity' (*rarae castitatis*)—the archetypal good Roman mother²⁴—an essential formative influence, ensuring that he is properly trained,²⁵ and does not veer too much towards the dangerous path of . . . philosophy.

²⁴ See Quint. *Inst.* 1.1.6–8 on the important role of mothers in their sons' education: Cornelia is cited as the prime example; also Cic. *Brut.* 58.211. Messalla, in the *Dialogus*, attributes the former glory of orators to the early care of the mother (*Nam pridem . . . gremio ac sinu matris educabatur*, 'For long ago [a son] was brought up at the bosom of his mother', 28.4) and singles out Cornelia, Caesar's mother Aurelia and Augustus' mother Atia as paradigms of *disciplina* ('orderly life') and *seueritas* ('sternness'), women who endowed their sons with a *sincera et integra . . . natura* ('pure and uncorrupted character', 28.5–6). See Suzanne Dixon's ([1998] 170–1) discussion of the 'authority which the mother, as an experienced member of the older generation, could legitimately wield over a young son,' despite her formal exclusion from the law courts and senate. Dixon (1998) 170–1 also comments that the dangers of philosophy to adolescent sons is a trope that appears in biographies of some emperors.

²⁵ *Mater Iulia Procilla fuit . . . in huius sinu indulgentiaque educatus per omnem honestarum artium cultum pueritiam adulescentiamque transegit* ('His mother was Iulia Procilla . . . in whose bosom and fond care he was brought up and passed his childhood and adolescence in a complete training in the liberal arts', *Agr.* 4.2. Ogilvie and Richmond (1967) 2 point out that the name 'Procilla' is common in Gaul, but rare elsewhere,

memoria teneo solitum ipsum narrare se prima in iuuenta studium philosophiae acrius, ultra quam concessum Romano ac senatori, hausisse, ni prudentia matris incensum ac flagrantem animum coercuisset.

(Tacitus, *Agricola* 4.3)

I remember that he often told the story of how he would have imbibed an enthusiasm for philosophy rather more fiercely than is allowed for a Roman and a senator, had it not been for the discretion of his mother, who reined in his fired up, burning imagination.

There are ethnic and sexual implications in the precise regulation of the young mind. As Catharine Edwards has argued,²⁶ it was vital to retain a measure of sophistication (often represented by Greek culture), while avoiding an overabundance of enervating Hellenic refinement. An imbalance would have dire consequences for the ability of the political or military leader to function properly. The East was a particularly perilous zone: but Agricola survives the dangers of his post as quaestor in Asia under a corrupt proconsul (*Agr.* 6.2). Asia was the pick of the provinces, not least because of the opportunities it provided for exploitation and rapacity on the part of Roman officials (see Cic. *QFr.* 1.1.37–9). Its reputation as a repository of decadence and Greek sophistication made it doubly hazardous to the principles of the impressionable young Roman.

Just as Agricola needed the guidance of his reliable mother in his youth, so Britain requires firm constraint and cannot be left without discipline. Tacitus claims that the province has had a succession of disastrously lax legates during Nero's later years. Trebellius (63–69 CE) cannot even command the respect of his army and treats the province with 'courtesy'—*comitas* again (*Agr.* 16.3). As a result, the naturally fierce Britons degenerate into softness and vice, while the army can only cope with its leader's lack of energy and authority by resorting to mutiny (16.3).

Trebellius' command has disastrous effects and is a reminder of the damage that might have been done to Agricola, had the refinement of Massilia not been tempered by 'provincial frugality'. Britain, naturally *ferox*,²⁷ with all the positive and negative associations of that

which suggests that she was local aristocracy, further ensuring the positive influence of provincial restraint.

²⁶ Edwards (1993) 20–4.

²⁷ Contrasting the Britons with the Gauls, Tacitus comments: *plus tamen ferociae Britanni praeferunt, ut quos nondum longa pax emollierit* ('The Britons, however, show more

epithet (courageous, high-spirited, daring, as well as unbridled, wild, insolent), soon degenerates into vice and softness and Tacitus emphasises that this is something that the natives *learn* from Rome's inactivity: *didicere iam barbari quoque ignoscere uitii blandientibus*, ('now the barbarians too learn to forgive pleasing vices', *Agr.* 16.3).

It is clear that Trebellius' indolence results in the dissolute behaviour of both the Britons (shocking because they are normally tough) and his own troops (shocking because they are Roman soldiers). Trebellius' lack of proper preparation for military leadership has a domino effect, spawning *licentia* ('unruly behaviour') among the machinery of empire and its subjects and throwing both into turmoil.

Agricola's virtues, on the other hand, are *integritas* ('integrity', *Agr.* 9.4), *abstinentia* ('self-denial', 9.4), *moderatio* ('temperance', 42.3) and *prudencia* ('discretion', 42.3), while his leadership is marked by clarity, justice, restraint and especially by appropriateness and balance. It is these qualities, monumentalised by Tacitus' text, which will commemorate Agricola and, instead of a traditional Roman ancestor mask, Agricola's moral integrity becomes his monument. Tacitus plays on another meaning of *forma*—not only does it mean 'map' or 'shape', but also 'likeness' or 'model'. In the final paragraph of the text, *forma* is used twice²⁸—previously it defined the shape of Britain; now it refers to the memorial left to Agricola's wife and daughter:

formamque ac figuram animi magis quam corporis complectantur.
(Tacitus, *Agricola* 46.1)

They embrace the form and image of his mind rather than that of his body.

forma mentis aeterna, quam tenere et exprimere non per alienam materiam et artem, sed tuis ipse moribus possis.
(Tacitus, *Agricola* 46.3)

courage, as is typical of those whom long-standing peace has not yet softened', *Agr.* 11.4); see also *Agr.* 21.1, 31.3. This model parallels and recalls Caesar's comparison of Gauls and Germans: there the Gauls are weakened by repeated Germanic victories over them and by the luxuries entering through Provincia (*B Gal.* 6.24; also see 1.31). See also Strabo 4.4.2, 4.1.2–3. The Britons are typically represented as tough and warlike because they live simply and without comfort, e.g., Diod. Sic. 5.21.5–6; later Cass. Dio 57.12.4–5 and Herodian 3.14.6–8 represent the Britons as hardy and bloodthirsty, which suggests that Tacitus' depiction of their decline into luxury was not universally held.

²⁸ Out of a total of only four times in the *Agricola*: also at *Agr.* 10.3, 14.1.

It is the eternal form of the mind that you yourself can retain and express by your own moral conduct, rather than through someone else's material and art.

The metaphorical vocabulary is interestingly redesignated here: Rome embraced and contained Britain within a fixed *forma*—now it is the *forma*, or template, of Agricola's upright life that must *be* embraced. In both cases, there are ethical implications: the Roman model instructs and transmits patterns of behaviour outwards, from the father to his family, from the general to the barbarians.

Corrupting the Natives

Rome is represented in the *Agricola* as the bringer of peace, stability and culture to Britain.²⁹ The educational process that produces the perfectly balanced man is, in turn, put into practice upon the provincials, as they are literally educated in the Roman fashion: the sons of local aristocracy are placed in rhetorical schools and the native landscape takes on a veneer of Greco-Roman culture (*Agr.* 21). Tacitus expresses this as a deliberate policy of colonial conversion, necessitated by the lack of civilisation and order among the Britons:

Sequens hiems saluberrimus consiliis absumpta. namque ut homines dispersi ac rudes eoque in bella faciles quieti et otio per uoluptates aduescerent, hortari priuatim, adiuuare publice, ut templa fora domos extruerent, laudando promptos, castiganda segnes: ita honoris aemulatio pro necessitate erat. iam uero principum filios liberalibus artibus erudire, et ingenia Britannorum studiis Gallorum anteferre, ut qui modo linguam Romanam abnuebant, eloquentiam concupiscerent. inde etiam habitus nostri honor et frequens toga; paulatimque discessum ad delenimenta uitiorum porticus et balneas et conuiuiorum elegantiam.

(Tacitus, *Agricola* 21.1–2)

The following winter was taken up in the soundest plans. For in order that a people, which was scattered and rough and proportionately ready for war, should be habituated to tranquility and peace through pleasures, he encouraged individuals and aided communities to construct temples, fora and homes, by praising the eager and rebuking the lazy: so there was a rivalry for his compliments instead of coercion. Further, he educated the sons of the chiefs in the liberal arts and pre-

²⁹ See Klinz (1991) 109–10.

ferred the natural talents of the Britons to the training of the Gauls, so that those who had recently rejected the language of the Romans now wished for rhetorical skill.³⁰ Even our form of dress became an honour and the toga became common. And gradually there was a deviation towards the allurements of vices: the porticoes, the baths and the refinement of banquets.

In one short paragraph the disorderly Britons are transformed into near Romans.³¹ The adoption of Latin by the local chiefs is a powerful tool in the armoury of the colonial authority.³² Language and its ability to have a transformative effect would later form an important model for the strategies of the British empire, as seen in the 1835 speech of Thomas Babington Macaulay (the president of the Committee of Public Instruction in Bengal): the *Minute on Indian Education*.

Whoever knows that language [English] has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth, which all the wisest nations of the earth have created and hoarded in the course of ninety generations. It may safely be said that the literature now extant in that language is of far greater value than all the literature that three hundred years ago was extant in all the languages of the world together. Nor is this all. In India, English is the language spoken by the ruling class.³³

Britain sees itself as the inheritor of Classical culture and the dissemination³⁴ of the English language now becomes the job of empire; its acquisition becomes desirable and confers status, as it is the currency of the controlling group. Tacitus similarly represents the ancient Britons'

³⁰ Plutarch (*De Def. Or.* 2) records the presence of a Greek school teacher, Demetrius of Tarsus, in Britain during the Flavian era. Ogilvie (1967) 224 identifies him with the dedicator of two plaques in York (*RIB* 662–3).

³¹ This is Strabo's highest praise: the exemplary Tourdetanians of Spain are 'not far from being Romans' (3.2.15). For a discussion of the actual emergence of Roman 'amenities' in Britain, see Millett (1990) esp. 69–101. Millett questions the reality behind the urbanisation suggested by Tacitus here and its characterisation as deliberate imperial policy.

³² The deliberate reproduction of educational institutions to effect the co-option of the local ruling classes is reminiscent of the British empire's actions in Malaya, where the Kuala Kangsar Malay College was known as 'the Malay Eton', as discussed by Anderson (1991) 91 n. 20).

³³ Macaulay (1972) 242.

³⁴ Macaulay (1972) 243 terms it as a literal *insemination*: 'There are in modern times . . . two memorable instances of . . . arts and sciences *planted* in countries which had recently been ignorant and barbarous' (my emphasis). The metaphor depicts the activities of empire as natural and organic and it recalls the Roman habit of representing the colonial subject as sexually penetrated by the conqueror.

eagerness to take on a language and a code of dress previously rejected. In effect Agricola's scheme demolishes all resistance to Roman rule: he supersedes native culture with that of the colonial power, dividing allegiances, in what Benedict Anderson, commenting on the Macaulay speech, calls '[a] sort of mental miscegenation'.³⁵

Rome's co-option of local elites as an efficient means of maintaining the *pax Romana* is notorious. By the end of the Flavian era, the degree of cultural absorption is such that Martial praises a British woman who has completely assimilated:

Claudia caeruleis cum sit Rufina Britannis
edita, quam Latiae pectora gentis habet!
quale decus formae! Romanam credere matres
Italides possunt, Atthides esse suam.
di bene quod sancto peperit fecunda marito,
quod sperat generos quodque puella nurus.
sic placeat superis ut coniuge gaudeat uno
et semper natis gaudeat illa tribus.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 11.53)

Although Claudia Rufina was born of the blue-dyed Britons,
how she has the heart of the Latin people!
what dignity of form! Italian mothers can believe
that she is Roman, Attic mothers that she is one of theirs.
May the gods allow that she is fertile and bears children to her sacred
husband,
that she, though a girl herself, hopes for sons and daughters-in-law.
Thus may it please the gods that she rejoices in one husband
and always rejoices in the rights of three children.

Claudia's hopes are identical to the conventional aspirations of the Roman wife—to be an *uniuira* and to bear many legitimate children. She embodies the potential for future generations of marriageable Roman citizens, ensuring continuity and permanence. The very fact that she, British in origin, is able to generate Roman citizens says something about the ease with which Rome conferred citizenship and the fluidity of affiliation. Claudia Rufina has truly been 'embraced' by Rome, her entire identity is transformed—and we should note that the word Tacitus used to describe the 'embracing' of the Caledonian tribes by the Roman army—*amplectus*—can also indicate a new shape taken on in physical metamorphosis (e.g., Ov. *Met.* 8.609).

³⁵ Anderson (1991) 91.

This seems to have its logical outcome in Claudia—she has metamorphosed into the perfect Roman woman.

But this is not the only evaluation of the Romanisation of Britain available in the Flavian era. While Martial (like Macaulay) exhibits no doubts about the benefits of colonial conversion, Tacitus typically equates the civilisation of Britain with its *degeneration*, the latter falling hard on the heels of the former with grim inevitability.³⁶ In many respects, decline is the logical outcome of Romanisation, as Roman writers often conceived of their own culture as being in a state of decline: what the Britons suffer is merely an accelerated version of Rome's own history. The point at which this decay began varies, but it is often connected with goods and practices being imported from the East and is usually located at a particular military victory.³⁷ Silius incorporates the rhetoric of degeneration into Jupiter's show-stopping narrative of Rome's future: empire will build moral fibre, but Roman excess will threaten its destruction—a danger that only military heroes, in particular the Flavian emperors, will be able to avert (*Pun.* 3.584–617). Empire can be both saviour and destroyer of Rome, as the seeds of decline are built into the very policy of expansionism.

Chaos Theory: Mutiny and Civil War

In the *Agricola* issues of imperial expansion are problematic: the colonial project is advertised and then undermined. At the same time, the values that determine the imperial project—order and balance—are shown to be essential: these virtues also promote peace and harmony. The inversion of these values leads to chaos and turbulence, as manifested by civil war and rebellion—events that represent the

³⁶ Braund (1996) 162–5 argues for a distinction between the actions of *Agricola* and the subsequent corruption that, he claims, Tacitus ascribes to the Britons' own perversion of civilisation. Although this is persuasive, I argue that this ever-elusive text gives a less definitive attribution of blame. While it is true that *Agricola* is explicitly made to stand for all that is traditionally upright and Roman, the corruption of the Britons lays bare to an even greater degree the depths to which these values have been degraded by the principate.

³⁷ E.g., 187 BCE the return of troops from Asia (Livy 39.6.7); 168 BCE: the Battle of Pydna (Polybius 31.25); 146 BCE: the destruction of Carthage (Sall. *Iug.* 41.2, *Cat.* 10).

antithesis of empire, the *deformation* of the imperial project—the perversion that turns aggression back on oneself in a suicidal implosion.³⁸ It is particularly appropriate that this Flavian text should meditate upon the anarchy unleashed upon the Roman world in 68–69 CE, which Vespasian both participated in and brought to an end. The events of this year are crucial in constructing Tacitus' fractured vision of history: imperial Rome fails to contain its wars, not only in its inability to direct warfare at the proper target and maintain the distinction between legitimate enemy and fellow citizen,³⁹ but also in the lack of solid boundary between civil and external war: it is a period of 'three simultaneous civil wars, more external ones and generally [wars] jumbled together' (*trina bella ciuilia, plura externa ac plerumque permixta*, *Hist.* 1.2.1).⁴⁰ Rome's disorder takes on a distinctly moral dimension—there are 'stained rituals and great adulteries' (*pollutae caerimoniae, magna adulteria*, *Hist.* 1.2.2) and the diminished control at the centre causes confusion for the satellites, as provinces are described as 'disturbed' (*turbatum*) and 'unstable' (*nutantes*, *Hist.* 1.2.1). Civil war has a direct effect on *Agricola*—the allegorical aspects of which should not be lost on us—as Otho's marauding troops roam the Mediterranean and butcher his excellent Gallic mother (*Agr.* 7.1).

There is no simple answer to the problems of colonial control. When it is removed, arbitrary violence is the inevitable result, as

³⁸ *Historiae* 2.12–13 describes the actions of Otho's unruly fleet in Liguria at more length, in this case stressing the inappropriate transference of hostility: *non Italia adiri nec loca sedesque patriae uidebantur: tamquam externa litora et urbes hostium urere, uastare, rapere* ('they did not seem to be approaching the towns and homes of their fatherland but, as though they were attacking foreign shores and cities, they burned, destroyed and raped', 2.12.2). Lack of restraint and military discipline also play a part here, as two of the three generals assigned to attack *Narbonensis* are subject to mutiny and loss of their troops' respect, while Tacitus implies that the third, Clemens, actively encourages his men to rampage across the Province (which seems to be almost elided into Italy here): *Clemens ambitioso imperio regebat, ut aduersus modestiam disciplinae corruptus, ita proeliorum audius* ('Clemens ruled with ostentatious authority; he was as lacking in restraint and instruction as he was full of greed for battle', 2.12.1; my emphasis). For a discussion of the distortion and disorientation involved in the rhetoric of civil war, see Henderson (1990).

³⁹ The paradox is summed up by the burning of the Capitol by Roman hands (*ipso Capitolio ciuium manibus incenso*) ('the very Capitol was burned by the hands of citizens', *Hist.* 1.2.2)—the citizen body literally destroys its own head.

⁴⁰ O'Gorman (1995) 124 points out that this 'blurring of distinctions' is brought to the fore in *Historiae* 4, as the enemy becomes Julius Civilis and 'the narrative shifts from *bellum ciuile* to *bellum Ciuilis*'.

exemplified by the mutiny of the Usipi conscripts off the British coast in 83 CE. After conducting random raids on Britain, they are forced to resort to auto-cannibalism (*Agr.* 28.1–3). Cannibalism is related to the sub-civilised, disordered and malformed in Roman thought;⁴¹ for Tacitus, consumption of humans specifically denotes a lack of discipline and regulation. The initial crime committed by the Usipi is that they murder their centurion and the Roman soldiers, who were set to keep them in check and provide them with a positive model of behaviour (28.1); without the guidance of their Roman commanders, the Usipi prove completely inept and are forced to eat the weakest of their own group; they then lose their ship and are eventually captured and sold into slavery.

The Usipi sabotage themselves by their short-sightedness—they destroy the very forces that enable them. Killing their Roman superiors leaves them without the knowledge to function as a navy—they have *inscitiam regendi*—literally ‘ignorance of controlling’ (*Agr.* 28.3). Their blind meanderings around the North Sea contrast sharply with Tacitus’ later description of Agricola’s circumnavigation of Britain, which is undertaken as a deliberate decision, a planned expedition: *praefecto classis circumuehi Britanniam praecipit*—‘he ordered the commander of the fleet to circumnavigate Britain’ (38.3). Although the Usipi actually achieve this feat *before* the Roman navy does, it is Agricola who is credited with having established the insularity of Britain (10.4) and providing complete knowledge of it (10.1), because it is his fleet that succeeds in mapping Britain’s geographic whole. The random wanderings of the marauding Usipi are much too disorderly to provide accurate data: they lack knowledge themselves and cannot be the begetters of it. Appropriately, as they are unable to control their impulses, their fate is to be forced into constraint by becoming slaves (28.3).

A similar fate awaits the Britons, who will be ground down by Roman efficiency and whose probably fictitious leader Calgacus gets

⁴¹ The classic cannibals in antiquity are the Androphagoi, described by Herodotus (4.18.3, 4.106.1) as beyond the Scythians—themselves extremely savage (Herod. 4.59–75); Later geographers tend to conflate the Scythians and cannibals, further associating savagery and anthropophagy (e.g., Strabo 7.3.6; Mela 2.9–14; Plin. *HN* 6.53). Pliny (*HN* 6.195) places cannibals among the bodily deformed in Africa. Cannibalism also indicated a primitive state in antiquity (Moschion frag. 6) and could be utilised as an ethnic slur (Juv. *Sat.* 15). For an anthropological analysis of cannibalism as an ethnographic trope, see Arens (1979).

the longest speech in the text: an unmitigated diatribe against Roman megalomania.⁴²

... infestiores Romani, quorum superbiam frustra per obsequium ac modestiam effugias. raptores orbis, postquam cuncta uastantibus defuere terrae, mare scrutantur: si locuples hostis est, auari, si pauper, ambitiosi, quos non Oriens, non Occidens satiauerit; soli omnium opes atque inopiam pari adfectu concupiscunt. auferre trucidare rapere falsis nominibus imperium atque ubi solitudinem faciunt pacem appellant.

(Tacitus, *Agricola* 30.3–4)

... the Romans, more hostile [than the sea] whose pride you try in vain to avoid by obedience and discipline. They are the rapists of the world; after there are no more lands for them to devastate, they probe the sea: if the enemy is wealthy, they are greedy, if he is poor, they are eager for glory; men whom neither the East nor the West has glutted: alone of all peoples they desire rich and poor things with the same passion. To steal, butcher, rape, they call by the lying name 'empire', and when they make desolation they call it 'peace'.

At these junctures words begin to lose their authority:⁴³ *imperium* ('empire') is reduced to *raptus* ('rape', 'plundering') and so called *pax Romana*⁴⁴ is nothing more than atrocity-laden devastation. Calgacus' speech is densely packed with such destabilising redefinitions,⁴⁵ reversing Rome's idealised view of itself as disseminator of cultural values.

⁴² Williams (1989) 50 discusses this speech as a transcendent vocalisation of protest, calling it 'a universal statement against the whole project that was the reputed glory of Rome'. Braund (1996) 167–8 argues against reading Calgacus' speech as a critique of Roman imperialism, adding that the more sober address of *Agricola* (*Agr.* 33.2–34.3) would have had more appeal for the contemporary reader.

⁴³ As *Annales* 1.81, where *libertas* ('freedom') becomes *seruitium* ('slavery'). See Henderson (1990) 173 ff. on the 'world of faithless language'. The corollary in Tacitus is that the barbarian takes on traditional Roman qualities, as Roberts (1988) 128–30 argues for the Boudicca narrative: it is therefore a symptom of the perverse condition of Rome that *uirtus* ('moral excellence', 'virtue') is found in the emotional and disorderly. On the inversion of values and categories in Tacitus, see Boyle (1984) 32 on *Annales* 13–16: 'Sex roles are inverted. . . . Social roles are inverted too . . . Even the appearance of goodness seems to ruin'.

⁴⁴ Peace is a heavily contested word throughout Tacitus' work: in the *Historiae*, *pax* is the nominal reason for the principate (1.1). In the *Annales*, peace can function as a cover for laziness, as in the case of Turpilianus, the governor of Britain in 61 CE (14.39.3).

⁴⁵ The barbarian enemy is similarly utilised as commentator in the *Annales*. Bloomer (1997) 175 writes on Arminius: 'The barbarian complicates any easy antithesis, for the painted, duplicitous German speaks genuinely. When he sees the desolation worked by the Romans, he undermines their nominalism by calling it desolation not peace. Evocation of Roman primitivism and yet enemy, Arminius and the bar-

Calgacus' language here is reminiscent of that used in the civil war narrative of the *Historiae* to describe the same troops of Otho who kill Agricola's mother (*Hist.* 2.12–14). There also a tripling accumulation of infinitives⁴⁶ renders the viciously destructive activity of Roman troops—*urere* ('to burn'), *uastare* ('to devastate'), *rapere* ('to rape', *Hist.* 2.12)—note the crescendo to *rapere* in both cases. For the British chief, the desecration continues during the Flavian era, as civil war's criminal anarchy becomes empire's normality. He reinterprets and belittles the colonial mission as a mere empty form, a front for a gang of piratic thugs to sweep to the end of the world, looting and destroying under the pretence of adhering to the *Aeneid*'s civilising ideal. Anchises told his son Aeneas that he should 'put civilisation in control of peace' (*pacique imponere morem*, *Aen.* 6.852).⁴⁷ The Romans as 'rapists of the world' (*raptore orbis*) is not quite what Anchises had in mind. This rape is more than metaphorical for the Britons, whose 'wives and sisters are defiled by so-called friends and guests' (*coniuges sororesque . . . nomine amicorum atque hospitum polluuntur*, *Agr.* 31.1). Calgacus looks back (and forward) to the *Annales* and Boudicca, whose grievance derives from the rape of her daughters and the whipping of her own body (*Ann.* 14.31). British bodies become permeable, accessible and violable, available as slaves' flesh to non-consensual sex and physical violence.

Throughout Tacitus' depiction of empire and authority there is frequent overlap between the vocabulary of colonial rule, sexual violence and enslavement. When Britain is returned to imperial submission after the Boudicca revolt, it is described as being 'restored to the old subjection' (*ueteri patientiae restituit*, *Agr.* 16.2). *Patientia* and

barians . . . indicate that the changed (overturned) status of Rome (which the narrative has declared in its various censuses) is internal, a problem of *uultus* ['face'] and *animus* ['mind']. Ironically this liberator of Germany (*liberator haud dubie Germaniae*, 'certainly liberator of Germany', 2.88.2) and straight-talker, who disclosed the treachery of words, falls prey to the treachery of his own people, and is murdered by his relatives.

⁴⁶ This is similar to Ovid's technique when describing the swiftness with which gods rape women, for example, Jupiter and Io: *terras occuluit tenuitque fugam rapuitque pudorem* ('he hid the land, stopped her flight, and tore away her chastity', *Met.* 1.600)—five fast-flowing dactyls and three verbs in one line. See Richlin (1992c) 158–79 for discussion.

⁴⁷ Bews (1987) sees Agricola as the exemplar of his age and the contemporary version of *pious Aeneas* ('dutiful Aeneas'). Depending on your view of whether the *pious* is ironic, this could certainly be so.

its related verb *pati* commonly denote the passive sexual role,⁴⁸ feminising the conquered, and exposing them to the aggressive control of the conqueror.⁴⁹ *Obsequium* and its cognates act in a similar way and more explicitly connote servility (*Hist.* 2.87.2; *Ann.* 3.75.2) as well as sexual compliance (Liv. 39.42.9; Curt. 10.1.25; Columella 6.27.10); *obsequium* has a dubious valence in the *Agricola*: it can indicate the obedience that the soldier owes to his leader (as at *Germ.* 29.3; *Hist.* 2.19.2), something *Agricola* is always prepared to show, and that allows him to shine even in a time of tyrants (*Agr.* 8.3, 42.4). On the other hand it fails to protect the Britons from the Romans' arbitrary abuse of power, according to Calgacus: *Romani, quorum superbiam frustra per obsequium ac modestiam effugas* ('the Romans, whose pride you try in vain to avoid by obedience and discipline', 30.3).⁵⁰ *Obsequium* causes the subject some loss of dignity; it is explicable under duress, but, when humility no longer buys immunity, it becomes humiliation.

Calgacus sees empire as legalised piracy. The language he uses is analogous to that which is typically associated with the arch-enemies of the state, such as Catiline.⁵¹ There is a degree of affirmation of Calgacus' words from the narrative, as Roman soldiers are said to be *praedatores* ('plunderers') in the aftermath of the climactic battle (*Agr.* 38.1). For the provinces, Rome is as much the bringer of disorder as Catiline was to Rome. Civil war only increases the likeli-

⁴⁸ As Sen. *Ep.* 95.21 [*mulieres*] *pati natae* ('[women] born to submit'); Tac. *Ann.* 11.36 *in illo foedissimo coetu passus muliebria* ('he submitted to the woman's role in that most disgusting intercourse'). See Richlin (1992a) 196–7 and Adams (1982: 189–90) for further references and discussion.

⁴⁹ This is certainly true of the Gauls under Roman rule in Caesar (*Gal.* 6.24). Juvenal, *Satire* 2 ends with the most dramatic demonstration of this concept: a bellicose Armenian hostage is made sexually passive: *cunctis narratur ephebis mollior ardenti sese indulsisse tribuno*, 'softer than all the ephebes, he is said to have indulged an passionate tribune' (164–5). Richlin (1993) 553 comments that Juvenal builds on a tradition, common since Lucilius, of the 'Roman projection of Rome as a male fucking the rest of the world,' an idea that 'is probably intrinsic to Roman cultural identity'. For a more general example of Rome's ability to corrupt the colonised Other, see Sal. *Iug.* 8.1.

⁵⁰ Note that *modestia* and *obsequium* are juxtaposed in the figure of *Agricola*, in the passage that seeks to explain his survival under Domitian (*Agr.* 42.4).

⁵¹ Sallust lays the groundwork that makes Catiline's plot possible with this sort of rhetoric: *ea priuatim et publice rapere, delubra spoliare, sacra profanaque polluere* ('to steal public and private property, strip the shrines and defile the holy and the secular', *Cat.* 11.6); *luxuria atque auaritia cum superbia inuasere; rapere, consumere . . . aliena cupere* ('luxury and greed entered with arrogance; stealing, wasting . . . wanting someone else's property', (*Cat.* 12.2).

hood that atrocities will be committed: *dispersi per municipia et colonias Vitelliani spoliare, rapere ui et stupris polluere* ('scattered through the free towns and colonies, Vitellius' troops plundered, stole and defiled by violence and rape', *Hist.* 2.56).⁵²

Empire becomes both seduction and rape for Tacitus. As the Britons are led into veiled servitude by Roman culture, institutions and education (*Agr.* 21), so their acquiescence is phrased in masochistic terms by Calgacus himself. The conquered 'lend their blood to another's domination' (*dominationi alienae sanguinem commodent*); they 'live under the lash' (*inter uerbera*, 31.1). They attempt to break free because Rome has failed to give them enough affection, for 'fear and dread are weak chains of love' (*metus ac terror sunt infirma uincla caritatis*, 32.2). Tacitus suggests a complicity on the part of the subjugated that is mirrored by the actions of the senate, who offer up their own as victims in Domitian's latter-day purges:

mox nostra duxere Heluidium in carcerem manus; nos Maurici Rusticque uisus <adfixit,> nos innocenti sanguine Senecio perfudit.
(Tacitus, *Agricola* 45.1)

Our hands soon led Helvidius off to prison; Mauricius and Rusticus struck *us* with shame; Senecio bathed *us* in his innocent blood.

These are worthy successors to the senators of the first dynastic succession who, according to Tacitus, 'rushed into servitude' (*ruere in seruitium*, *Ann.* 1.7) as Tiberius came to power.⁵³

Conclusion

What meanings could be attributed to 'Britain' by Flavian Rome? It is a locus of remote exploration; a place to create imperial and military reputations; a space that can be tamed and restrained by the worthy. But it is also a critical space for opening up questions about the very nature of Roman imperialism, asking the question

⁵² This phrase builds on *pollutae caerimoniae* (*Hist.* 1.2.2), discussed above, to provide a picture of civil war's sacrilege.

⁵³ Also note *Ann.* 1.12.1: *Inter quae senatu ad infimas obtestationes procumbente* ('Meanwhile, the senate was bending over backwards in the most abject entreaties.'). The parallels between the senate and the war-conquered or enslaved are pervasive; see Williams (1990) 142–3; Roberts (1988) 128.

‘what does empire actually entail?’ ‘What are the implications for coloniser and colonised?’ Whatever we make of Tacitus’ analogies of enslavement between the cowardly senate and the conquered Britons, there is a sense in which any action or inaction becomes diseased—Tacitus offers up a vision of Rome as a world shattered by civil war and moral ambiguity. Its inability to maintain order by any means but despotism and servitude casts doubt upon the project of colonialism, as much as on the principate. The moral ambiguity surrounding the total submission of Britain spells out Flavian Rome as a steadily spiralling-downwards world, where *libertas* slides easily into *licentia* and slavery appears to be the only alternative to chaos and anarchy.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ The same frustration is expressed at the opening of the *Historiae*: the principate polarises historians into acting out of either servility or hatred—they either flatter (*libidine adsentandi*, ‘because of their lust to flatter’) or attack (*odio aduersus dominantes*, ‘because of their hatred of their master’). No other reaction seems possible: *neutris cura posteritatis inter infensos uel obnoxios* (‘neither hostile nor servile men had any concern for posterity’, *Hist.* 1.1.1). Yet Galba explains why this situation is ultimately untenable for ‘a people who can bear neither total slavery nor total liberty’ (*qui nec totam seruitutem pati possunt nec totam libertatem*, *Hist.* 1.16.5). The elusive balance between this binarism is consistently the alleged goal of the post-Flavian principate (as *Agr.* 3.1).

10. RHETORIC OF WRITING AND READING IN THE PREFACE TO PLINY'S *NATURALIS HISTORIA*

Patrick Sinclair

Man is at the center of a vast network of semantic relations whose system is nothing but a reproduction conceived in the image of human affectivity. The universe is entirely founded upon the intrinsic solidarity of nature and culture, an indivisible unity, which in fact models the former upon the latter.

(G. B. Conte)¹

... interpretation functions repeatedly as a politically interested act of persuasion.

(S. Mailloux)²

Previous studies of the elder Pliny's epistolary preface to his thirty-seven volume *Naturalis Historia* have focussed on clarifying its structure and sequence of thought from one section to another.³ The present chapter owes much to these earlier works, but here I offer some preliminaries for a different understanding. My focus is on the rhetoric of tropes governing the preface. This approach differs most decisively from that of earlier studies in that I do not regard Pliny's rhetoric as socially or politically neutral. Rather, I read the preface as a politically interested text in which the rhetoric Pliny uses sets up the reader for a particular interpretation of his encyclopedia, one that conforms to social and political norms—indeed, one that renders those norms common sense and thereby reproduces their power.

Perhaps the first step we should take is to recognise that in his preface Pliny uses the trope of an epistle addressed to a male counterpart of higher social standing, whom he designates by the name 'Vespasianus' (meaning Titus, son of the *princeps*). Pliny uses the rhetorical conventions of epistolarity to frame how the *Naturalis Historia*

¹ Conte (1994a) 89–90. Conte (1994a) 90 further urges that 'we should consider the *Naturalis historia* as a monumental "culture text" figuring within itself an implicit addressee upon whose expectations (upon whose competence) it is modeled'.

² Mailloux (1998) 50.

³ See, respectively, Köves-Zulauf (1973) 323–58; Pascucci (1982) 171–97; cf. Howe (1985) 561–76.

should be read to benefit oneself as a public servant and citizen. Pliny's preface is 'figured' as an epistle addressed to one individual reader (Titus), but this is a strategy that positions all readers to approach the *Naturalis Historia* according to a particular set of imperial conventions of interpretation. Names have great value throughout the preface. Their invocation forms the rhetorical bedrock upon which the structure of Pliny's arguments takes shape.⁴ These conventions of allusion, citation and 'name-dropping' from canonical literary sources support foundationalist views of authorship and the text, and by extension they 'authorise' this same underpinning for the particular project that follows Pliny's preface. Yet it is precisely this rhetorical claim of natural or commonsensical validity that demands scrutiny. Pliny's preface, as it enacts a specific manner of interpreting his *Naturalis Historia*, shows 'how interpretation itself can be politically interested, how claims for a reading are always direct attempts to affect power relations through coercion or persuasion'.⁵

Pliny's preface is thoroughly political in that the politics of nation, class, family and gender are simply assumed, rhetorically, for both the author and his readership. For Pliny the preface involves his membership in the equestrian order and his service under Titus, his brother Domitian and his father Vespasian; it involves the cultural capital that Pliny puts on display through the imitation and citation of other authors; it involves the community of intellectuals who read and critique Pliny's works; it involves his relations to his heir, the younger Pliny (giving the preface a testamentary aspect); and it may involve the elder Pliny's interactions with the scribes who contribute to and labour for his literary production. On the other side, the figure Pliny designates 'Vespasianus' also acts from within this political order and he interacts with Pliny on the basis of his superior political position and as a reader of Pliny's works with his own interests to pursue. Negotiating these diverse positions makes Pliny's rhetoric tactical, contingent and always interested (in spite of how he himself may present it as transparent, universal and unbiased). The following interpretation of Pliny's preface suggests how political interests are inseparable from the rhetorical positions he takes as cues to an interpretation of the *Naturalis Historia*, instructing his audience in how the text should be read and imitated through an atti-

⁴ Cf. Weber (1987) 94–5.

⁵ Mailloux (1998) 50–1.

tude of self-denial and self-regulation. I want to investigate the rhetorical aspects of the preface as it participates in Pliny's interactions with his contemporary readers and interpreters. In effect, Pliny sets himself up (or 'writes' himself) as his own model reader. And in order to elucidate his method I first discuss his 'rhetoric of writing' (focussing on gender and cultural production) before going on to elaborate his 'rhetoric of reading' by noting how his ideas of self-denial, self-discipline, imitation and public service exemplify a politics of interpretation.

Rhetoric of Writing and Production

Pliny's choice of the epistolary trope entails overlapping and loose binary oppositions that include (but are not exhausted by) presence/absence, outward/inward, public/private, speech/writing and male/female. These binary oppositions figure Pliny's text, but they should not be taken as absolute. Rather, Pliny invokes them as they suit his rhetorical purposes, using them to construct seemingly solid epistemological foundations for his arguments. In this first section we will look at seven 'scenes of writing' or passages in which writing serves as the focus of Pliny's interpretive agenda. Our purpose will be to observe how he shapes and interprets these scenes within a gendered rhetoric of production.

The preface presents a Pliny who actively engages with other readers and writers. The first word of the epistle proper is *libros* ('books') and Pliny soon proceeds both to give a reading of the first poem of Catullus and to rewrite it (1). Pliny addresses Titus as the supreme judge of his literary production (6–15) and of his public service (16–19). He describes his punishing late-night reading and writing regimen and his (self-denying) expectations for turning his life to good public account (16–19). He awaits the responses to his already published work *Dubius Sermo* from critics with Stoic, Academic and Epicurean leanings (28). And his preface contains quotations from earlier authors whom he invokes for support (like Cicero [7, 22], Cato [9, 30] and Varro [18, 24]), or others (like Livy [16]) with whose views of literature and politics he disagrees. In general it is male authors who populate the literary world Pliny projects and that he presents for aesthetic, ethical and political imitation. With distinctly Romano-centric views, this world displays cultural and gender

politics based upon the views of a politically active member of the equestrian order who imitates what he sees as the virtues and ways of life of the reigning nobility.

In the latter third of the first century CE a binary opposition between speech (or orality) and writing (or literacy) served as a trope in the rhetoric that elite Romans applied to the aesthetics, gender, ethnicity, class and national distinctions in 'the vast network of semantic relations' about which Conte writes in relation to the elder Pliny in the epigraph above. In order to suggest how Romans might associate orality with the female and writing with the male in their semantic system, I will begin with an illustration from a recent general social history text that lays the groundwork for showing the wider placement of this rhetorical trope in relation to Roman gender distinctions.

Paul Veyne begins the first volume of *The History of Private Life* with a chapter on the Roman empire entitled 'From Mother's Womb to Last Will and Testament'.⁶ Veyne's title seems to present a polar opposition. First, there is the female realm of biological reproduction through which a Roman (boy) begins life, in contrast to the distinctly male realm of reproducible written documents that rounds it off. This opposition rhetorically replicates the dominant Roman ideology about the progress of a (male) Roman citizen's life, whose common terms may be narrativised for the imperial Roman as follows: in the beginning is nature, mother, the domestic sphere and orality; in the end is culture, father, the public sphere and writing. The former, according to this logic, produces children and domestic crafts; the latter produces citizens and an empire.

Even before the written text of Veyne's historical reconstruction begins, he introduces his readers to the terms of this ideology with an iconographic representation of it, a photograph of a sarcophagus relief. This photograph suggests direct access to the past; it purports to be a historical document. But in fact it too forms part of the rhetoric of Veyne's presentation, since he has isolated just one scene from a relief that in fact unfolds in a sequence across the long front side of the sarcophagus.⁷ Veyne has cropped his photograph so as

⁶ Veyne (1987) 8–31.

⁷ See Baratte and Metzger (1985) 29–31. I am grateful to Matthias Waschek of the Musée du Louvre for helping me identify this relief as the sarcophagus of M. Cornelius Statius (inv. MA659). Veyne (1987) 14, 19 includes two more isolated scenes from the relief.

to frame the human figures in an apparently symmetrical binary opposition. On the left he frames orality, cast as an originary state of nature, represented by a child nursing at a woman's breast (probably its mother's). On the right Veyne captures literacy, cast as the culturally more advanced and privileged position, represented by the father, whom the scroll in his hand further characterises as citizen, writing author and orator. Two seemingly antithetical, distinct modes of production are made to face off against each other. And the gaze of the father in the direction of his child seems perhaps to try to generate in the viewer the pique of melancholy for this child who evidently was not destined to grow up to realise his full potential as a productive Roman citizen, to inherit his patrimony, and to keep the memory of his father alive in his mother tongue, as the inscription below the scene nonetheless preserves the memory of this son's Roman existence.

These oppositions, then, present the broad terms in which writing may be said to function in the patriarchal society in which Pliny's texts operated. Rather than replicate the unquestioned premises by which Roman patriarchy sought to represent the world to itself in order to perpetuate and essentialise those values, I suggest we examine the discourse of writing in Pliny's preface with particular reference to the sort of gender politics such a discourse entails. We can ask how Pliny presents and discusses writing and to what purposes; and in doing so we should be able to probe the ways he rhetorically uses writing to naturalise various aspects of Roman cultural patrimony, both in its inclusions and exclusions. By looking at Pliny's rhetoric of writing in the preface with particular attention to its opposition to orality, we will be analysing the gender politics of his preface, through which he sets up the reader for a specific interpretation of the *Naturalis Historia*. Using the preface we can illustrate how the rhetoric of writing, particularly the opposition with orality and the female, was a construct that generated important discourses of power in the Roman world, rather than the natural opposition it is so often taken to present. I neither want to argue that Pliny's preface was entirely representative, nor that he was entirely unique.⁸ I merely want to draw attention to some passages in his epistolary preface

⁸ See in general Habinek (1998), who discusses the discourse of writing primarily in authors somewhat earlier than Pliny.

where his rhetoric of writing illustrates some of the political stances he takes as he suggests guidelines for interpreting the *Naturalis Historia*. In analysing Pliny's rhetoric in this way I am working against a foundationalist interpretation of the text as presenting natural assumptions and universal positions; instead, I argue for an interpretation of the text as arguing for particular views that arise from Pliny's politically interested position, which always involves the politics of nationality or ethnicity, gender and class.⁹ Generally, Pliny's rhetoric has been stigmatised for his often rather bombastic remarks on the ethical categories one also finds in almost all the moralistic literature of the early Roman empire: for example, the rhetoric of his invectives against luxury and his denunciations of Nero's tyranny, or the language of his ethnographic studies, or the exemplars of moral virtue he espouses. Or critics marvel at and castigate the apparent gullibility with which Pliny loves to report *mirabilia*, the wonders of the world that he has read, heard about or seen, like his cases of people who never laughed or cried (7.79–80), people who died of joy (7.180), the wondrous achievements of elephants (8.1–35), the wonder-filled world that insects inhabit, and even his recommendation to wear a brassiere over one's head as a remedy for headache.¹⁰ Yet despite the profusion of references to Pliny's compendium, there have been few attempts to try to define the specific rhetorical mode governing and ordering his vast collection of wonderful animals, vegetables, minerals and home remedies.

This is surprising, given that Pliny himself invites such inquiry with the preface to his text, where he, in effect, tries to initiate his readers into his highly self-disciplined mode of interpretation. Whereas other studies have emphasised Pliny's adherence to and promotion of the stoic ideology of Nature,¹¹ I prefer to describe his text as part of the rhetoric of 'cultural production' (turning culture into nature is, as Foucault reminds us, the first move of ideology). Pliny records the world's 'believe-it-or-not' wonders and then gives a numerical tally of items he has written about because these marvels and numbers signify the force of production and virtually all aspects of production in the Roman world fascinate him. He wants his readers to

⁹ For this view of rhetoric see Fish (1989) 471–502.

¹⁰ See Richlin (1997a) 197–220.

¹¹ See Beagon (1992).

be fascinated by production, too, and so his rhetoric attempts to create in his readers the desire to produce in the world and produce according to Roman methods.¹² By the time he writes the preface to his *Naturalis Historia*, Pliny has already had a successful career as a member of the equestrian order. He has held important administrative posts in the empire and served as a member of the emperor Vespasian's inner circle of advisers. He recognised the importance of writing in terms both of private and public agency. The preface to Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* interweaves these two spheres, administrative writing and literary writing, in an enticing blend that attempts to fill the reader with enthusiasm for writing itself and the many ways it empowers Roman citizens.¹³

But now I want to turn the tables and focus attention particularly on the way Pliny's rhetoric about writing in his preface projects writing's antithesis, orality. Pliny immediately appropriates the originary characteristics of production with which Roman patriarchal ideology invested orality so as to authenticate his own literary production. This process starts in Pliny's first sentence, when he uses the metaphor of birth to refer to his *Naturalis Historia*:

Plinius Secundus Vespasiano Caesari suo s. Libros Naturalis Historiae, nouicium Camenis Quiritium tuorum opus, *natos apud me proxima fetura* licentiore epistula narrare constitui tibi, iucundissime Imperator; sit enim haec tui praefatio, uerissima, dum maxim*<i>* consenescit in patre. 'namque tu solebas nugas esse aliquid meas putare', ut obiter emolliam Catullum contreraneum meum (agnoscis et hoc castrense uerbum): ille enim, ut scis, permutatis prioribus syllabis duriusculum se fecit quam uolebat existimari, a Veraniolis <s>uis et Faul<l>is.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* praef. 1; my emphasis)

Plinius Secundus to his Vespasianus Caesar, Greetings. My books of *Natural History*, a new creation for the Camenae of your Quirites, *born to me by a most recent delivery*, in a somewhat audacious letter I have determined to describe to you, most harmonious Imperator: indeed, let this be the form of address for you most accurate, while that of 'grandest' grows venerable with your father. 'For you have customarily reckoned my trifles as something'—to smoothen Catullus, my landsman (you recognise even this army term): since he, as you know, changed the first syllables and made himself rather more rough than he wanted to be accounted by his dear Veraniuses and Fabulluses.

¹² Cf. Edwards (1996) 96–109.

¹³ For an interesting dialogue on Pliny's literary style see Murphy (1997) 20–40.

With this opening, Pliny's rhetoric establishes a subject or interpretive position for his readers. First and foremost, the epistolary tactic in his opening salutation to Titus invokes the presence-in-absence structure by which writing appropriates the authority of its supposed 'antithesis', namely, orality, according to which the lack of the desired in-person conversation has prompted the narrator to take to writing as a substitute. This rhetorical tactic enables Pliny to model the sort of relationship he wants to perform for a wider readership. The etiquette of addressing a member of the imperial household through writing only underscores the pervasive social institution of the orality-writing binary. Pliny's salutation also sets his preface and the entire *Naturalis Historia* in the context of the form of reciprocity specific to Roman society, namely, the client-patron relationship.

The second rhetorical tactic of Pliny's opening is to establish writing as an authentic mode of production within the imperial Roman economy. Again: *libros* ('books'), is the first word after his salutation. He then immediately states writing's public utility and authenticity through two descriptive clauses. The first, 'a new creation for the Camenae of your Quirites', advertises his work as a public service. The second, Pliny's statement that his books were 'born to me by a most recent delivery', introduces the recurrent imagery of parturition in the preface and has the effect of naturalising writing as a mode of production by subsuming it metaphorically within the economy of farming and animal husbandry.¹⁴ Pliny appears immediately as the successful owner of a productive estate. It may be rather surprising that he metaphorically defines his authorial 'labour' with the biological imagery of female farm-animal (re)production, but elsewhere he draws on traditional imagery of human female productivity to describe his work. For example, he writes of having 'woven' his indices at the beginning of his text:

argumentum huius stomachi mei habebis quod in his voluminibus auctorum nomina *praetexui*. est enim benignum, ut arbitror, et plenum ingenui pudoris fateri per quos profeceris, non ut plerique ex <i>is, quos attigi, fecerunt.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia praef.* 21; emphasis mine)

You will take as proof of my mettle that I have *woven* the names of my sources at the beginning of these volumes. For it is generous, so

¹⁴ *Fetura*, the word translated as 'delivery', refers most often to gestation among animals; see *TLL* 6.635.31–636.15 *s.v.* *fetura*.

I think, and full of honourable modesty to attest to those by whom you have benefited, unlike most of those whom I have mentioned have done.

Pliny here describes himself as figuratively having *woven* the indices of source names and table of contents that he has actually *written* at the beginning of his *Naturalis Historia*.¹⁵ Weaving is a venerable figure for literary production and organisation,¹⁶ and here Pliny takes imagery commonly associated with female domestic productivity and uses it for his indices. He seems to appropriate female means of production and reproduction in order to make his writing seem part of the natural economic order. And furthermore he does so as 'proof' (*argumentum*) and outward demonstration of his inner self-discipline (*stomachus*, 'mettle', and *ingenuus pudor*, 'honourable modesty'). Pliny sustains this imagery of writing as closely regulated (re)production throughout his preface, as we shall see, and it serves to further his self-denying but self-interested approach to interpreting the *Naturalis Historia* as a collection of information with an agenda that serves and supports the Flavian hierarchy and its dispensation of things.

Any risks to Pliny's masculinity that his identification of writing with the sphere of female production might cause him he more than adequately compensates for in the exclusively masculine discourse of the opening sentence that controls this analogy: first, the language of Vespasian and Titus' father-son relationship and male generational succession; and then Pliny's rhetorical tactics of quoting from army slang and from Catullus' poetry of male friendship.¹⁷ Pliny thus performs the always necessary function of reinscribing writing as a masculine and Roman discourse; and his rhetoric polices the fluctuating boundaries of the public and private so that the world of the Roman male citizen handily subsumes and usurps the terms of production with which it commonly stigmatises its female other. In Pliny's discussion of Catullus, his rhetoric of self-discipline shows him to be alert to anything that might seem excessive and so his position enables him to rewrite a line to smoothen (*ut emolliam*) the excessive language with which Catullus made himself 'rather more rough' (*duriusculum*) in Pliny's view. It is this self-regulating rhetoric of Pliny's that performs his masculinity even as he rewrites Catullus' lines to give them

¹⁵ For this use of *praetexere* see *TLL* 10.1046.49.

¹⁶ See, e.g., Scheid and Svenbro (1996); Nagy (1996) 63–86; Miller (1992).

¹⁷ See Pascucci (1982) 180.

the more feminine quality of smoothness. The performance of self-discipline and masculinity keeps these qualities and values foregrounded for the reader and thereby helps to delineate an interpretive approach to the *Naturalis Historia*.

If many generations of Roman men prior to Pliny had been refining a rhetoric for justifying and authenticating their writing in the sort of gendered terms that distinguish writing from oral uses of language, Pliny's preface also illustrates that this rhetoric could be deployed to draw lines of class and national difference. A pertinent example is the language in which Pliny defines his subject:

Meae quidem temeritati accessit hoc quoque, quod leuioris operae hos tibi dedicaui libellos. nam nec ingenii sunt capaces, quod alioqui <i>n nobis perquam mediocre erat, neque admittunt excessus aut orationes sermonesue au<t> casus mirabiles uel euentus uarios, iucunda dictu aut legentibus blanda *sterili materia*: rerum natura, hoc est uita, narratur, et haec sordidissima sui parte a<c> plurimarum rerum aut rusticis uocabulis aut externis, immo barbaris etiam, cum honoris praefatione ponendis.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia praef.* 12–13; my emphasis)

Indeed, to my own boldness has been added this too, that I have dedicated to you these slight books. For neither are they full of talent, which I possess only in moderation anyway, nor do they contain digressions or speeches or conversations, or wondrous occurrences, or unpredictable outcomes; events pleasurable to narrate or for readers comforting, a *barren subject matter*: the world's nature, that is, life, is my story, and that in its most tawdry aspect and for most things either uncouth terms or foreign ones, indeed even barbarous ones that have to be introduced with an appeal for decency.

In this passage Pliny adapts the language of feigned modesty that is conventional among Greek and Roman historians; and the disingenuous belittling of his project of using writing to conquer a new realm of human endeavour for Rome and deliver it to his imperial patron makes a display of Pliny's spirit of self-denial. The words *sterili materia* ('barren subject matter') stand out as oxymoronic. If Pliny says his *materia* ('subject matter') is *sterilis* ('barren'), it is because Roman literary patrons and authors had rarely considered that descriptions of the natural world could be productive of the sort of rhetorical elaboration worthy of Rome's governing classes. Pliny intends to change that. His *Naturalis Historia* will add to the cultural achievements of Rome through the discipline and denial that he has imposed

upon himself and his text. The rhetoric of Pliny's apology for using words deemed unsuitable to the literature of his class and his nation illustrates how the orality-vs.-writing binary could be employed in the discourse of the Roman elite's assertions of its class and ethnic superiority. Indeed, cultural critics like Masao Miyoshi have called into question the sort of distinctions between oral cultures and literate cultures that have been made by Jack Goody, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Eric Havelock, who (the argument goes) replicate and reinscribe the politics of the binary opposition that I think we can see at work in Pliny and thereby provide intellectual support for the modern politics of 'First World' empires that use the standards of literacy to segregate and exploit 'Third World' nations that they identify as primarily 'oral', underdeveloped and inferior.¹⁸ The connection to be made here is that Pliny's rhetoric of writing uses self-disciplinary arguments for how to read his *Naturalis Historia* that are founded on political notions about the productivity of gender, class and nation.

Pliny's rhetoric of 'writing as production' reaches a rather shrill pitch in the final paragraphs of the preface. Pliny presents Theophrastus as undeservedly having been attacked in writing by a woman:

ceu uero nesciam aduersus Theophrastum, hominem in eloquentia tantum, ut nomen diuinum inde inuenerit, scripsisse etiam feminam, et prouerbium inde natum suspensio arborem eligendi.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia praef.* 29)

As if indeed I did not know that against Theophrastus, a man so great in eloquence that he earned an immortal reputation for it, even a woman had written, and hence the proverb was born of choosing one's tree for hanging.

The anonymous woman writer upon whom Pliny heaps his disbelieving scorn gave birth to (*natum*) a deadly proverb rather than useful literary progeny. She left not even a word to quote; and indeed the proverb seems to shut her up. But for Pliny all forms of useful literary production count, from coining individual words to his *magnum opus*. Pliny describes Cato—for the political orders the ever imitable Roman father, politician, orator and author—engaging in an exemplary case of word-coining in a general context of what we

¹⁸ Miyoshi (1991) 50–6.

might call male linguistic 'parturition' (the context is again critical counter-writings):

ergo securi etiam contra utilitigatores, quos Cato eleganter ex uitiiis et litigatoribus composuit—quid enim illi aliud quam litigant aut litem quaerunt?—, exequemur reliqua propositi.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia praef.* 32)

Wherefore, protected even against *utilitigatores* ['fault-quibblers'], which Cato neatly coined from *uitia* ['faults'] and *litigatores* ['quibblers']—since what otherwise do those men do than quibble or seek out a quibble?—I shall complete the remainder of my undertaking.

Pliny's preface shows his own interest in creating new words acceptable to add to the Roman vocabulary (*conterraneus*, 'landsman', 1; *causatius*, 'with greater reason', 7). But if Pliny's text might be said to be illustrative of the Roman discourse of writing, it might perhaps also be said to be extraordinary in at least one aspect: it was written by a man who seems never to have married or produced children of his own to accompany his works and preserve them. He left instructions for the testamentary adoption of his sister's son upon his death, an arrangement that he draws attention to in his preface:

Vos quidem omnes, patrem, te fratremque, diximus opere iusto, temporum nostrorum historiam orsi a fine Aufidii. ubi sit ea, quaeres. iam pridem peracta sancitur et alioqui statutum erat heredi mandare, ne quid ambitioni dedisse uita iudicaretur. proinde occupantibus locum faueo, ego uero et posteris, quos scio nobiscum decertaturos, sicut ipsi fecimus cum prioribus.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia praef.* 20)

About all of you, indeed, your father, you and your brother, we have spoken in a befitting work, a History of Our Times starting from where Aufidius left off. Where is it? you will ask. Long since finished, it is enshrined and at any rate I have decided to commit it to my heir, so that no part of my life may be adjudged to have been given to ambition. Therefore, I encourage those who hold this position, indeed also coming generations, who I know will fight it out with us, just as we ourselves have done with our predecessors.

The preface has an overarching testamentary purpose where the subject of writing and reading are concerned.¹⁹ The elder Pliny clearly envisions that his heir will be among those to come who will par-

¹⁹ Cf. Weber (1987) 96.

ticipate in Roman letters. Like father, like son—even when the son is a nephew adopted after one's death. Roman literature repeatedly uses the father-son relationship as one of its primary authenticating tropes. Writers produce writers; writing produces writing. Romans present this inter-generational sequence as virtually untouched and unaffected by women's participation in reproduction, education outside the household, literary production and public service.

In the text of his *Naturalis Historia* Pliny does quote from women writers, most notably for us perhaps in his discussion of abortion-inducing potions (28.81). As we have seen, in the discourse of writing, women's production can be negatively associated with death; and the rhetoric of (re)production can also enlist the terminology and imagery of infanticide, miscarriage and abortion. An example of this rhetoric in Pliny's epistolary preface is:

Ego plane meis adici posse multa confiteor, nec his solis, sed et omnibus quos *edidi*, ut obiter caueam istos Homeromastigas (ita enim uerius dixerim), quoniam audio et Stoicos et dialecticos Epicureosque—nam de grammaticis semper expectaui—*parturire* aduersus libellos, quos de grammatica *edidi*, et subinde *abortus* facere iam decem annis, cum celerius etiam elephanti pariant.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia praef.* 28; emphasis mine)

I clearly admit that many things could be added to my books, not to these only, but also to all those that *I have produced*, so that along the way I might guard against those Homer-flagellators (for I want to speak truthfully), since I hear that both the Stoics and the Academics and also the Epicureans—for from the philologists I have always expected this—are *in labour* against the books on grammar that *I produced*, and that they have repeatedly had *miscarriages* during the past ten years, although even elephants give birth more quickly.

Here Pliny invokes the negative imagery of the rhetoric of writing to stigmatise as transgressive the hostile activities of his literary critics. Whereas his own literary production has been successful (*edidi*, 'I produced'), the misguided efforts of his opponents have resulted in the destruction of their written 'progeny'. As I said above, Pliny's preface can be seen as indicative of Roman thinking about orality and writing; and he fits into a long tradition of the way men have represented their artistic production. As Barbara Johnson has written,

While one could undoubtedly find counterexamples on both sides, it is not surprising that the substitution of art for children should not be inherently transgressive for the male poet. Men have in a sense always

had no choice but to substitute something for the literal process of birth. That, at least, is the belief that has long been encoded into male poetic conventions. It is as though male writing were by nature procreative, while female writing is somehow by nature infanticidal.²⁰

In the final passage of his preface Pliny maintains the complexity of this discourse of writing up until the very last words:

quia occupationibus tuis publico bono parcendum erat, quid singulis contineretur libris, huic epistolae subiunxi summaque cura, ne legendos eos haberes, operam dedi. tu per hoc et aliis praestabis ne perlegant, sed, ut quisque desiderabit aliquid, id tantum quaerat et sciat quo loco inueniat. hoc ante me fecit in litteris nostris Valerius Soranus in libris, quos Ἐποπτίδων inscripsit.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia praef.* 33)

Since it was for the public good that your activities ought to be spared, what is contained in the individual books I have appended to this letter and with the greatest care I have seen to it that you do not have to read them. By this means you will offer to others as well that they do not have to read them in their entirety, but as each reader shall seek something different, let him seek just that and know where to find it. This feature was previously used in our literature by Valerius Soranus in the books that he entitled Ἐπόπτιδες [*The Vigilant Goddesses*].

Pliny's conclusion draws together the strands of what I have been calling his 'rhetoric of writing and production'. He gives greatest prominence to his relationship to the audience he constructs for himself, his patron and judge Titus; and he emphasises his argument for his writing's productivity and public utility. He adds a description of the important advancement in book-technology that he has incorporated in the form of the labour-saving and time-saving indices that serve as a sort of 'Ariadne's thread' leading into his volumes (cf. *praef.* 21). In his final sentence Pliny begins by citing Valerius Soranus as a literary-technical predecessor.²¹ Thus he once again indicates his position in the legacy of Roman literary patrimony and again he invokes the mythic model of (re)production between men. But Pliny's citation here of this particular work by Valerius Soranus, *The Vigilant Goddesses*, could perhaps also be regarded as a virtual invocation of their blessing. These watchful deities who serve and protect in the interests of the state will insure the authenticity and

²⁰ Johnson (1987) 197–8.

²¹ See Köves-Zulauf (1970) 323–58.

survival of Pliny's text—even as mortal women are relegated to inferior positions in the social, ethical, aesthetic and political hierarchy. And the Vigilant Goddesses do more. They serve a function very much like that of Titus as he judges Pliny's writing. Their vigilance figures as a divine supervisory principle to insure that Pliny's text is read and imitated in an attitude of self-discipline and public service. This supervision is very important to Pliny, as we will see in the next section, since the rhetoric of his text performs the self-denial and self-discipline for which he wants to be recognised as a writer and that he wants his reader to learn to imitate.

Rhetoric of Reading and Imitation

When one writes, one writes more than (or less than, or other than) one thinks. The reader's task is to read what is written rather than simply attempt to intuit what might have been meant.

(B. Johnson)²²

I have suggested that Pliny operates as both writer and reader in the preface to his *Naturalis Historia* and that his rhetoric foregrounds these activities in order to provide a basis for interpreting his *Naturalis Historia*. As writer, Pliny determines the tropes by which to define his subject; in the passages we have looked at he provides a model of a writer whose self-denial and self-discipline function in the public service. Moreover, in quoting previous writers he has assembled a group of literary authorities and written them into his text, making it a virtual group project, a regular all-male 'defense team' for the trial to which he says he must subject his work.²³ In delineating Pliny's 'rhetoric of writing' I left his 'rhetoric of reading' implicit to the discussion. But I now want to concentrate on Pliny as model reader. In this section I focus on several key passages in Pliny's epistolary preface where he develops a specific rhetoric of reading and imitation, thereby explicitly demonstrating for his readers how they might incorporate the values he has woven into his text.

From the opening of the preface, the epistolary format draws attention to reading as a social practice. The functions reading performs

²² Johnson (1995) 46.

²³ Cf. Howe (1985) 566.

are indicated soon after Pliny's rewriting of Catullus, in which he explains his public-oriented reading of the verse he cites: *namque tu solebas nugas esse aliquid meas putare, ut obiter emolliam Catullum conterraneum meum (agnoscis et hoc castrense uerbum): ille enim, ut scis, permutatis prioribus syllabis duriusculum se fecit quam uolebat existimari a Veraniolis <s>uis et Faul<l>is* ("For you have customarily reckoned my trifles as something"—to smoothen Catullus, my landsman (you recognise even this army term): since he, as you know, changed the first syllables and made himself rather more rough than he wanted to be accounted by his dear Veraniuses and Fabulluses', *HN praef.* 1). The passage is the first example of reading that Pliny provides and here I want to concentrate on his politically interested interpretation. Specifically, Pliny observes that, in these lines, Catullus 'made himself rather more rough than he wanted to be accounted'. *Existimari*, the word translated here as 'to be accounted', is a fundamental term by which Roman aristocrats assessed each other's compliance with the standards of their class.²⁴ The early sections of Pliny's preface devote a significant amount of space to the subject of how reading serves as a method for judging both Pliny's writing and Pliny himself in this technical, class-conscious sense. Pliny's rhetoric of reading presents the situation as being one in which his worthiness as a member of the equestrian order with close connections to the *princeps* and his sons comes under evaluation in the very process of reading the preface and the *Naturalis Historia*. As Pliny writes in the passage immediately following his interpretation of Catullus,

simul ut hac mea *petulantia* fiat quod proxime non fieri questus es in alia *procaci epist<u>la* nostra, ut in quaedam acta exeat sciantque omnes quam ex aequo tecum uiuat imperium. triumphalis et censorius tu sexiesque consul ac tribuniciae potestatis particeps et, quod his nobilius fecisti, dum illud patri pariter et equestri ordini praestas, praefectus praetorii eius omniaque haec rei publicae es: nobis quidem qualis in castrensi contubernio, nec quicquam in te mutauit fortunae amplitudo, nisi ut prodesse tantundem posses <e>t uelles.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia praef.* 2–3; my emphasis)

At the same time, so that through this *impetuosity* of mine there might come about that which you recently in connection with another *impudent letter* of mine complained was not happening, that there might result some completed works and everyone might know how equitably

²⁴ See Habinek (1998) 45–59.

with you the empire lives. You, recipient of a triumph and censor, six times consul and partner in tribunician power and, what you performed more honourably than these, since you offer it to both your father and to the equestrian order, prefect of his praetorian guard, and you are all these in service to the republic; to us indeed how great you have been as a campmate, and nothing at all did the magnitude of your fortune change in you, except that you can confer as much as you want.

Here Pliny's language of praise and blame points to the political nature of the circumstances as he has presented them. He mentions an earlier instance of reading in which he came under evaluation for political purposes. On that earlier occasion, he had sent an 'impudent letter' (*procaci epistula*, *HN praef.* 2) to Titus, which Titus judged unfavourably because of Pliny's failure to produce a work praising him. Now, with this epistolary preface (which he also describes in *praef.* 1 as a *licentior epistula*, a 'somewhat audacious letter'), Pliny is forced to re-read himself—the result being that he finds himself having to make up for the lack of a tribute to Titus that Titus had complained about in the earlier letter. Pliny uses the language of praise to celebrate Titus and that of self-censure to express his own awkwardness in seeming to evaluate his superior. He acknowledges the cultural constraints operating upon his literary relationship with Titus: *itaque cum ceteris in ueneratione tui pateant omnia <a>lia, nobis ad colendum te familiaris audacia sola superest: hanc igitur tibi imputabis et in nostra culpa tibi ignoscas* ('And so, whereas for others all avenues lie open to honour you, for us there remains only the *presumption* of celebrating you on more personal terms. Therefore, you will charge this presumption to your own account and you will pardon yourself for my transgression', *HN praef.* 4; emphasis mine). Pliny's rhetoric of self-censure makes him appear to be the model of discretion, as he observes the social and political boundaries separating him from Titus. His rhetoric maintains his self-discipline and self-denial in observance of contemporary notions of gender, class and ethnicity in the service of nation and leader. These are the values that have not only produced his work, but guided his self-censorship as the reader over his own shoulder.

Pliny's recitation of Titus' achievements, offices and personal attributes in sections 3–5 of the preface figures as part of this rhetoric of reading, since these attributes of rank determine what constitutes authoritative interpretation. According to this scenario, Titus' reading of Pliny's text performs an evaluation, one that marks the different

standards operating within the social and political spheres each man inhabits. At the conclusion of his long exposition of Titus' virtues, Pliny invokes aristocratic assessment as a device to draw attention to the various class issues involved in Titus' reading and judging of his work:

sed haec quis possit intrepidus *aestimare* subiturus ingenii tui iudicium, praesertim lacescitum? neque enim similis est condicio publicantium et nominatim tibi dicantium. tum possem dicere: 'Quid ista legis, Imperator? humili uulgo scripta sunt, agricolarum, opificum turbae, denique studiorum otiosis. quid te iudicem facis? <c>um hanc operam condicerem, no<n> e<r>as in hoc albo. maiorem te sciebam, quam ut descensurum huc putarem.'

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* praef. 6; my emphasis)

But who could *assess* all this without apprehension when about to submit to the judgment of your intelligence, especially when it has been requested? For the situation is different for those who simply publish and those who expressly dedicate a work to you. In the former case I could have said, 'Why are you reading that, Emperor? It was written for the lowly multitude, for the swarm of farmers and labourers, then for those with leisure for study. Why do you make yourself judge? When I undertook this work, you were not on the list. I knew you were greater than I could think you would descend to this level.'

Pliny places himself in the posture of one who cannot fearlessly 'assess' (*aestimare*) Titus' achievements and status when he himself has to undergo evaluation by Titus. He imagines himself saying to Titus, 'Why are you reading that, Emperor? It was written for the lowly multitude. . . . Why do you make yourself judge?' Here Pliny's rhetoric performs the class differentiation essential to evaluation among the different orders at Rome. In this passage and others like it in the preface, Pliny's rhetoric equates reading with evaluation and it argues that judgments should be made according to appropriate and well-known standards. Pliny's vaunted anxiety about having Titus as a judge rests on an uncertainty about the standards he will be held to—but also on an uncertainty about his own position in the preface when he gives himself the last (authoritative) word concerning what constitutes a proper reading. A similar concern over standards occasions the next sentences, in which Pliny cites Cicero citing Lucilius:

Praeterea est quaedam publica etiam eruditorum reiectio. utitur illa et M. Tullius extra omnem ingeni<i> al<e>am positus et, quod miremur,

per aduocatū defenditur: 'nec doctissimis. Manium Persium haec legere nolo, Iunium Congium uolo'.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* praef. 7)

Moreover, there is a sort of public 'rejection of jurors' even among the learned: it was even used by Cicero, who holds a reputation for talent beyond all risk, and he is defended by an advocate, which astounds us: 'And not for the very learned. I do not want Manius Persius to read this, I want Iunius Congius.'

What seems clear from these somewhat obscure lines is that what is at issue is the question of what are proper terms for evaluation. The writer or speaker must recognise the appropriate standards of judgment by which he will be assessed. Pliny further quotes with admiration a passage in which Cato displays his confidence in his own talent and his political status by saying, *scio ego, quae scripta sunt si palam proferantur, multos fore qui utilitigent, sed ii potissimum, qui uerae laudis expertes sunt. eorum ego orationes si<u>i praeterfluere* ('I myself know that if what I have written is published, there will be many who will quibble at faults, but mostly those who lack real merit. Their speeches I have let flow by', *HN* praef. 30). Pliny's confidence in his own work rests on criteria that Cato might well have found strange or beneath him. The question of what standards Pliny will be judged by bothers him and prompts him to compose passages in which he attempts to justify his work and the values for which he has undertaken it.

It is in the central section of the preface (16) that Pliny pays the most detailed attention to what I have been calling his 'rhetoric of reading'. He begins with his own reading of a sentence from the historian Livy:

Equidem ita sentio, peculiarem in studiis causam eorum esse, qui difficultatibus uictis utilitatem iuuandi praetulerint gratiae placendi, idque iam et in aliis operibus ipse feci et profiteor mirari me T. Liuium, auctorem celeberrimum, in historiarum suarum, quas repetit ab origine urbis, quodam uolumine sic orsum: 'iam sibi satis gloriae quaesitum, et potuisse se desidere, ni animus inquires pasceretur opere'. profecto enim populi gentium uictoris et Romani nominis gloriae, non suae, composuisse illa decuit. maius meritum esset operis amore, non animi causa, perseuerasse et hoc populo Romano praestitisse, non sibi.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* praef. 16)

And so indeed I believe there is a unique place in learning for those who prefer the service of helping overcome difficulties to acclaim for

giving pleasure; I myself have done this both now and in all my other works, and I proclaim my astonishment at the illustrious author T. Livius, in one volume of his *History from the Foundation of Rome*, where he starts like this: 'that now he had achieved enough fame, and he could have stopped, if his restless mind were not fed by work'. For certainly it was for the victories of the Roman people, conqueror of nations, and for the glory of the Roman name, not his own, that he ought fittingly to have written those books. It would have been greater merit to have persisted in love of his work, not for the sake of his mind, and to have carried out this work for the Roman people, not for himself.

The rhetoric of Pliny's evaluation of Livy in this passage sets before our eyes a reader in an act of critical reading and interpretation in accordance with Pliny's values of self-discipline, self-denial and service to the Roman state. The concision and scolding force of Pliny's argument invites the reader to imitate his model. Pliny's next paragraph hammers home the rhetoric of reading with a detailed account of the features of his text that are designed to serve the self-disciplined citizen of Rome. Pliny offers these attributes in the form of a list, but his listing (like any inventory) is not neutral, but rather evaluative and interpretive:

XX rerum dignarum cura—quoniam, ut ait Domitius Piso, thesauros oportet esse, non libros—lectione uoluminum circiter II, quorum pauca admodum studiosi attingunt propter secretum materiae, ex exquisitis auctoribus centum inclusimus XXXVI uoluminibus, adiectis rebus plurimis, quas aut ignorauerant priores aut postea inuenerat uita. nec dubitamus multa esse quae et nos praeterierint. homines enim sumus et occupati officiis subsiciuisque temporibus ista curamus, id est nocturnis, ne quis uestrum putet his cessatum horis. dies uobis inpendimus, cum somno ualetudinem computamus, uel hoc solo praemio contenti, quod, dum ista, ut ait M. Varro, musinamur, pluribus horis uiuimus. profecto enim *uita uigilia est*. quibus de causis atque difficultatibus nihil auso promittere hoc ipsum tu praestas, quod ad te scribimus. haec *fiducia operis*, haec est *indicatura*. multa ualde pretiosa ideo uidentur, quia sunt templis dicata.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia praef.* 17–19; emphasis mine)

20,000 subjects deemed worthy of consideration—since, as Domitius Piso said, there is need of storehouses, not books—by the reading of around 2,000 volumes, few of which scholars ever touch because of the obscurity of their subject matter, from one hundred selected authors we have contained in thirty-six volumes, with a great number of subjects added that either earlier writers had ignored or subsequent life has discovered. Nor do we doubt that there are many things that have

passed us by too. For we are human beings and busied with our duties, and we attend to these interests in our spare stretches of time, that is, at night, lest any of your household think that in these hours we have fallen idle. Our days we pay out to you, with sleep we make calculation for our health, satisfied indeed with this payment alone: that while (as M. Varro says) we are musing over such topics, we extend life by more hours. For to be sure *life is wakefulness*. Given these reasons and difficulties, I do not dare to make promises; you bestow the very matter that we write to you. This is the *guarantee for my work*, this is its *rating of value*. Many things seem particularly precious for the reason that they have been dedicated in temples.

Perhaps because he is a member of the equestrian order, Pliny does not summon up a family history to validate his writings. Instead, he calculates in financial terms his work's 'guarantee' and 'rating of value' (*fiducia* and *indicatura*, *praef.* 19), and he calculates life itself according to this same set of terms. He works on the assumption that his own criteria for evaluating his text can be guided by another system of value that Titus, as his nominal judge, represents; indeed, simply invoking the name 'Vespasianus' serves Pliny rhetorically like setting a gold standard for interpretation.²⁵ In section 17 of the preface, Pliny uses numerical values to authenticate himself rhetorically as reader and excerptor (100 authors and 2,000 books yielding 20,000 subjects). Still using financial language, Pliny explains in section 18 of the preface how he found time for reading and writing during the night, after he had 'paid out' his duties in the service of country and leader. He caps this section with his own motto: *uita uigilia est* ('life is wakefulness'). The maxim performs an important function in Pliny's rhetoric of reading, since it handily sums up his views and gives his reader a brief, alliterating phrase to excerpt from the text, to memorise, and to imitate for the moral virtues it implies: self-discipline, self-denial and self-supervision (remember those Vigilant Goddesses whom Pliny invokes in his conclusion). This kind of selective excision from and imitation of what one reads exemplifies a basic value of the preface. Pliny's model reader constantly excerpts, cites and quotes by name, and he makes sure that his readers get the point:

scito enim conferentem auctores me deprehendisse a iuratissimis e<x>
proximis ueteres transcriptos ad uerbum neque <n>ominatos, non illa

²⁵ Cf. Habinek (1998) 46 on conversion between differing standards of value.

Vergiliana uirtute, ut certarent, non Tul<l>iana simplicitate, qui de re publica Platonis se comitem profitetur, in consolatione filiae 'Cran-torem', inquit, 'sequor', item Panaetium de officiis, quae uolumina ediscenda, non modo in manibus cotidie habenda, nosti. obnoxii profecto animi et infelicitis ingenii est deprehendi in furto malle quam mutuum reddere, cum praesertim sors fiat ex usura.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* praef. 22–3)

For you must know that in collating my authorities I have discovered that by the most dependable authors and from among the most recent, venerable writers have been transcribed verbatim but not acknowledged by name, not with that noble Virgilian spirit to contend, nor with Cicero's directness, who proclaims in his *De Re Publica* that he is Plato's companion, and in his *Consolatio* to his daughter says, 'I follow Crantor', and likewise about Panaetius in his *De Officiis*, which volumes you know should be thoroughly studied, not just handled every day. Indeed, it is proof of a malevolent spirit and a luckless temperament to prefer to be discovered in theft than to repay a loan, especially since profit accrues from interest.

Here, again, Pliny thematises reading and writing at the beginning of the section (*conferentem auctores*, 'in collating my authorities') and he brings to his audience's attention the results of his own vigilant reading. The key to Pliny's little diatribe here is the financial language with which it concludes: *cum praesertim sors fiat ex usura* ('since profit accrues from interest'). Pliny's model reader, like his productive writer, accounts for his time and thus renders his daily and nightly labours a proper object for imitation. In a flash of wit, Pliny recalls another nightly toiler in the sweatshops of literature, the clever but self-indulgent Bibaculus:

nostri gr<au>iores Antiquitatum, Exemplorum Artiumque, facetissimi Lucubration<u>m, puto quia ibaculus erat et uocabatur.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* praef. 24)

Our more serious Roman writers entitle their works *Antiquitates* ['Antiquities'], *Exempla Artesque* ['Cases and Methods'], and our wittiest *Lucubrationes* ['Late Night Musings'], I think because the author was one Bibaculus ['Imbibor'] and that was his name.

In this brief, aphoristic sentence, Pliny evokes important guidelines for reading and interpreting his *Naturalis Historia*. First and most obviously, by introducing the late-night boozier Bibaculus,²⁶ Pliny per-

²⁶ On M. Furius Bibaculus see Schanz (1927) 290.101; Conte (1994b) 141.

forms a brief comic twist on his rhetoric of the ideal writer and model reader. Bibaculus, as an inebriate, functions in Pliny's rhetoric as an intemperate contrast to the self-disciplined and self-denying reader and writer whose days are spent in official public service and whose nights are spent on research activities and literary productions that serve the public good. Secondly and perhaps more easily overlooked, this sentence provides yet another example of Pliny in the act of reading. Pliny mentions the title *Lucubrationes* and then interprets it in light of the author's name, *Lucubrationum*, puto quia *ibaculus erat et uocabatur* ('Late Night Musings, I think because the author was one Bibaculus and that was his name'). Pliny reads Bibaculus' name and title and interprets them in such a way as to promote, rhetorically, the argument about the nature of writing and reading that he has embedded throughout his epistolary preface, for, as we have seen, authorising names—from Bibaculus and Cato to Varro, Vespasianus and the Vigilant Goddesses—provide Pliny with the rhetorical foundations upon which to base his reading and writing. According to Pliny's rhetoric, literary productivity and interpretation take place within a political scheme that calls for self-discipline and self-denial in the service of gender, class and nation. With these ground rules firmly established in his preface, Pliny sends his readers on their way to consult the by no means rhetoric-free *Naturalis Historia*.

11. PLINY'S *NATURALIS HISTORIA*: THE PRODIGAL TEXT

Trevor Murphy

Though many students of the ancient world have recourse to the elder Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* as a work of reference, very few read the book *per se*. We read for the miscellaneous facts, mining for bits of ancient science, art, history or architecture instead of reading the book; we read without regard to context, without examining the disposition or selectivity of the *Naturalis Historia*. I would like to propose another way of reading by inquiring into the literary culture from which the *Naturalis Historia* grew and the expectations that shaped it.¹ First, I shall examine Pliny the researcher, that is, Pliny in relation to his sources. It is as a researcher that Pliny has come in for the harshest criticism—criticism that is, I argue, based on an empiricist ideal that Pliny did not share. As I shall show, this criticism ignores the literary economy that lies behind the *Naturalis Historia* and other ancient inquiries into nature. Secondly, I will look at Pliny's work as a describer, taking for my evidence his descriptions of rivers in the geographical parts of the *Naturalis Historia*. Considering these as artefacts of a cultural practice of writing about nature, I will show how Pliny's rivers are themselves seen economically. They participate in an economy of fame, in which reputation becomes one of the categories of natural taxonomy and narrative and biographical modes of description supplement the geographical.

Writing on the *Naturalis Historia*, G. E. R. Lloyd makes a persuasive case for seeing the elder Pliny as a victim of literary tradition, an investigator who spent too little time in the direct observation of nature and too much time reading what others had written about it. Pliny's researches were 'overwhelmingly literary';² that is, when he wrote *inuenio* or *reperio* ('I find') he usually meant that he found

¹ Beagon (1992) has broken new ground in attempting to understand the *Naturalis Historia* on its own terms. I have also found the studies of Conte (1994a) 67–104 and Wallace-Hadrill (1990a) 80–96 particularly helpful.

² Lloyd (1983) 136.

a certain fact not by personal observation, but among his literary authorities.³ Not only did Pliny spend too much time reading, Lloyd argues, but he was reading the wrong sources: to good authorities like Aristotle and Theophrastus, Pliny added poets (Homer, Aeschylus and Virgil), Presocratic philosophers (dubiously excerpted), and a variety of kings and princes cited *honoris causa*.⁴ He could have given more accurate accounts of nature had he devoted less time to books and spent more time among the illiterate country-folk (*agrestes, litterarum-que ignari*) who had direct experience of his subjects. But the written culture of knowledge (if not knowledge itself) had developed enormously since the investigations of Aristotle and Theophrastus. In Pliny's case, the world-in-text was an obstacle to independent research and literary tradition excluded an empirical treatment of nature.⁵

Lloyd is, of course, interested in the relative fortunes of empirical science and theory in the history of ancient thought. But Pliny, far from prizing first-hand knowledge, gloried in the fact that most of his material was second-hand. Certainly Pliny depended on literary tradition for what he wrote about nature; in this he was no different from other writers like Lucretius, Seneca or Aelianus. What is unusual is how explicit he was about his dependence—he almost boasts about it. Unlike most ancient authors he cited his sources: together with his table of contents, they are arranged for us in a massive display (the proverbial 'parade of sources' is no exaggeration) that takes up book one of the *Naturalis Historia*. In case the reader nods, he even adds them up:

uiginti milia rerum dignarum cura—quoniam, ut ait Domitius Piso, thesauros oportet esse, non libros—lectione uoluminum circiter duorum miliorum . . . ex exquisitis auctoribus centum inclusimus triginta sex uoluminibus.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia praef.* 17)

From a reading of approximately 2,000 volumes . . . written by one hundred select authorities,⁶ I have comprised in thirty-six volumes 20,000 things worthy of consideration—since, as Domitius Piso says, we have need of storehouses, not of books.

³ Lloyd (1983) 137.

⁴ Lloyd (1983) 136.

⁵ Lloyd (1983) 148–9.

⁶ Actually 453 authorities, by one modern count: Coulson (1976) 367.

No claim to elegance or originality here and certainly no apology for lack of first-hand knowledge. What does this bland totting-up of facts say about the expectations that surrounded the production of such a work? An anecdote from Pliny's life may hold the clue.

The Economy of Story

Instead of the *Naturalis Historia* of the elder Pliny, we might well have had the *Naturalis Historia* of Larcus Licinus. In a letter to Baebius Macer, consul 103 CE, which is a portrait of the life of the elder Pliny, his nephew the younger Pliny tells the story of how his uncle was once given an unusual opportunity: he could have sold the contents of his encyclopaedic *Naturalis Historia* to another man (*Ep.* 3.5.17). In Spain as procurator in charge of the imperial finances of the province, Pliny was in his spare time also at work on his book, then still in progress and by no means as large as it would eventually become.⁷ He was approached by one Larcus Licinus, who wanted to buy the notebooks Pliny was assembling and offered 400,000 *sestertii* for them. It must have been a tempting prospect. 400,000 *sestertii* was a substantial sum, in fact the minimum property qualification of a Roman *eques*; if Pliny had not already been one, he could have earned the right to the title now. What is more, Licinus, a man of praetorian rank and *legatus Augusti propraetore* (imperial governor) of Hispania Tarraconensis, was Pliny's superior.⁸ But Pliny refused him and even took some pride in refusing him, it seems, because afterwards he made a habit of telling the story (*referebat ipse*), says his nephew. It would be simple enough to assume that he would be proud of the fact that his work had attracted an offer of such value. But it is more complex than a matter of 400,000 sesterces. For Licinus merely to propose such a transaction was in itself peculiar. There is no other case known in the ancient world of a wealthy man offering to buy an author's rough notes for any price, high or low. What Licinus was offering Pliny was unprecedented—and deeply offensive too.

What we know about Larcus Licinus from other sources (he is mentioned in the *Naturalis Historia*, in Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*, and another

⁷ Sherwin-White (1966) 223.

⁸ Sherwin-White (1966) 223.

of the younger Pliny's letters) makes it clear that he enjoyed doing unprecedented things and as a result was not much liked. He had a bad reputation among writers of the Flavian period that remained attached to his memory thereafter. Like many other writers of the first century CE, Licinus reacted against Ciceronian canons of Latinity and wrote a polemic against Cicero's style titled *Ciceromastix* ('The Scourge of Cicero').⁹ This was enough for Aulus Gellius, always a faithful defender of the old against the new, to call him a blasphemer as bad as a mortal who disparages the gods (*NA* 17.1.1). But this was not his only sin. On the authority of his teacher Quintilian, the younger Pliny reports that Licinus was the first orator to practise what grew into the pernicious trend of hiring a claque to applaud one's own speeches, whose ignorant hooting and clapping had disfigured oratory ever since (*Ep.* 2.14.9–13).

Gellius, Quintilian and the younger Pliny agree in finding Licinus guilty of bad taste in general, a famously offensive person, and the story of his offer to Pliny fits neatly into this portrait. By the standards of literary courtesy, his ambition of purchasing Pliny's stock of facts outright was, as I shall show, offensive on a colossal scale. And though his nephew does not report that Pliny showed any outright indignation, the *Naturalis Historia* itself testifies that Pliny took a dry kind of revenge on Licinus—by writing him into the stock of stories he wanted to buy. The would-be owner of the *Naturalis Historia* became a subject member of it when Pliny wrote him into the book in the form of two anecdotes, in both of which he appears as a helpless and pathetic butt for Nature's power. The first of these, which shows him in a ridiculous and humiliating light, occurs in Pliny's description of the truffle: *Larcio Licinio praetorio uiro iura reddenti in Hispania Carthagine paucis his annis scimus accidisse mordenti tuber, ut deprehensus intus denarius primos dentes inflecteret* ('A few years ago, Larcus Licinus, praetorian official responsible for the administration of justice at Cartagena in Spain, found a coin enclosed in a truffle he was biting when he bent his front teeth on it', *HN* 19.35). Pliny's second anecdote comes as the rather sinister punch-line to a description of the three springs of the Cantabrian river Tamaris. Their varying flow was thought to predict the future and Pliny says: *dirum*

⁹ On the tensions between adherents of the neo-Ciceronian and postclassical styles, see Dominik (1997c) 50–68.

est non profluere eos aspicere uolentibus, sicut proxime Larcio Licinio legato pro praetore post septem dies accidit ('It is a terrible portent if the water stops flowing for someone who wants to see these springs; this happened recently to the praetorian Larcus Licinus and was confirmed by what happened to him after seven days', *HN* 31.24). Precisely what happened to Licinus after seven days Pliny does not say—maybe it was then that he bent his teeth on the truffle—but the language of the passage (*dirum est*, 'it is a terrible portent', *HN* 31.24) suggests that he died.¹⁰ In any case, both of these anecdotes Licinus functions as an object for marvellous forces of nature to work on, demonstrating their power, and so vindicating the importance of Pliny's subject. Pliny had put Larcus Licinus decisively in his place.

Seen in the context of the times, Larcus Licinus' desire to buy Pliny's stock of facts outright is understandable. The branch of literature that dealt with *mirabilia*, the tales of exotic nations or curiosities of nature that make up such a large part of the *Naturalis Historia*, enjoyed considerable popularity in Rome. Long before Pliny, curiosities were suitable subjects for writers of miscellanies: from the sources Pliny cites, we know that aristocratic Romans toured the East to see the quaint collections of ancient kings or garner anecdotes for gentlemanly works on the world's marvels. Pliny cites one of these works, by Licinius Mucianus, no fewer than thirty-two times. For those whose interests were not so literary, there was at Rome a place where deformed slaves were exhibited to potential buyers, a market of monstrosities (τεράτων ἀγορά) where the curious could gawk at the legless, the armless and the three-eyed (Plut. *De Curios.* 520C). Even Vespasian's son Titus is known to have taken an aristocratic interest in relics and marvels. Dispatched by Vespasian to pay homage to Galba, in order to avoid arriving in Italy at a potentially awkward moment in the struggle between Otho and Vitellius, Titus diverted his voyage to Cyprus to examine the antiquities and strange rituals of the Temple of Venus at Paphos, very much the tourist (Tac. *Hist.* 2.1–4).

But the breach of etiquette Licinus committed is evidence for much more than the popularity of this kind of writing. It also casts some light on the culture and practice of literature at Rome. It is instructive to compare Larcus Licinus as an aspiring authority on natural

¹⁰ This is the interpretation of Sherwin-White (1966) 223.

history with the scholar and antiquarian Aulus Gellius. Though he acted from similar motives, it will be seen that Gellius, in appropriating such stories for his own use, showed a good deal more reverence and bashfulness toward his sources than Licinus intended. A desire to read *mirabilia* seized Gellius when he was visiting the used book dealers of Brundisium, and he gave in to the temptation to buy a bundle of old books by paradoxographers (writers on wonderful things). Reading through these authors over two consecutive nights, he transcribed their stories into his own notebooks until the sickening fascination of cannibal Scythians, the evil eye, monocular Arimaspi, monsters and dog-headed men finally made him ashamed. All the same, he could not stop himself from transcribing even more bizarre stories (including anecdotes about spontaneous reversals of sex that he took from book 7 of Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*) and cobbling them together into a chapter of the *Noctes Atticae* (9.4). In effect, despite his claim that it was against his better judgement, Gellius used his collection of old *mirabilia* to punctuate the sober antiquarian tenor of the *Noctes Atticae* with a racy and colourful excursus into the grotesque. The effect is to vary the texture of his book, so that reading the *Noctes Atticae* becomes a more intricate and curious experience—qualities Gellius prized in his own reading. But what we ought to note is that though he wove his chapter out of other writers' raw material—as Larcus Licinus had hoped to do with Pliny—Gellius is careful to cite all his sources, all of whom are recognised authorities, and all long dead. The very acknowledgement of his squeamishness serves to distance him from his authorities, a kind of proleptic defence.

Licinus' attempt to take stories by purchase was offensive because it was in contradiction of a singularly aristocratic feature of Roman literary culture, the exchange of text and of story to mark the social circulation of favour and power. In this respect, Pliny's book is deeply conservative. The *Naturalis Historia* embodies many of the politenesses of the literary class of Rome in the Flavian period and, a descendant and an example of the kind of literary exchange that benefits the honour of both giver and receiver, also invokes the aristocratic customs of the republic. The classic example of this kind of exchange is the preface to Cicero's *Brutus*, where the acts of writing, dedicating and accepting literary texts mark off a circle of aristocratic friendship existing between Cicero, Atticus and Brutus, who dedicate books

to one another and turn by turn are spurred to literary activity by the works dedicated to them:

admonuit, Pomponi, ut a te ipso sumerem aliquid ad me reficiendum teque remunerandum si non pari, at grato tamen munere: quamquam illud Hesiodum laudatur a doctis, quod eadem mensura reddere iubet quae acceperis aut etiam cumulatior, si possis.

(Cicero, *Brutus* 15)

Your book, Atticus, advised me to take from you something to restore myself and to repay you in a measure you may like even if it is not equal—although the learned praise Hesiod's advice, to pay back what you got in equal measure or if you can with even more.

Throughout this passage (*Brut.* 13–19) Cicero plays on the conceit that my writing a new book for you, friend, discharges the debt I incurred when you wrote your last book for me. Such an exchange was part of the Roman system of aristocratic privilege, an adjunct of *amicitia*, and a marker of social alliance among nobles. To dedicate a book to someone or to receive or transmit a story were all ways of distinguishing the bond of friendship.

To take a later instance of this kind of literary exchange, in one of his letters (*Ep.* 9.33) the younger Pliny passes along to his poet friend Caninius Rufus a story about a remarkable dolphin in Africa that would swim into a shallow bay and play with children, re-enacting the myth of Arion. The gift of this particular story, offered as a subject for a poem by the Caninius, serves to mark the friendship between the two literary men. The story of this dolphin is of particular interest to us because the younger Pliny appropriated it in fact from his uncle's *Naturalis Historia* (it appears in *HN* 9.26–28). He was motivated to pass on to Caninius this curiosity of natural history because stories about wonderful things, or *mirabilia*, were in themselves collectible entities and within the channels of a privileged friendship might circulate as tokens of esteem. But if it was a polite mark of *amicitia* to receive stories from one's friends or to give them, it was offensive to want to buy them.

It was a vulgar thing to buy stories, quite another to receive them from one's friends. Hence the importance of giving credit to one's sources, if one was in the habit of exchanging stories with those of high rank. This is recognition that Pliny gladly gave his sources and in so doing advertised his social connections with the inner circles of the powerful at Rome. In fact, Pliny drops enough names that

one may, as Ronald Syme has done,¹¹ build up from them a substantial picture of Pliny's career and professional connections. It was undoubtedly a matter of no little pride to Pliny that he could count among his authorities the emperor Titus, the emperor's younger brother Domitian and Licinius Mucianus. Titus, who as we have noted was known to have an interest in antiquities and marvels (Tac. *Hist.* 2.4), contributed a note about comets (2.89); Domitian is a source for book 33, on precious metals; Licinius Mucianus (consul for the third time in 74 CE), the great man who played kingmaker to the Flavian party in the wars of 69 CE, wrote a collection of *mirabilia* from which come no fewer than thirty-two anecdotes, notable among which is the description of an enormous Lycian plane-tree inside which he once held a banquet (Plin. *HN* 12.9). Add to these the many informants from Pliny's own social class, 'famous authorities among the equestrian order' (*auctores in equestri ordine splendentes*, *HN* 9.10),¹² procurators and other functionaries in the imperial service who relayed from their provinces reports of sea-monsters in Spain (9.10–12, 89), the geography of Mauretania (5.12), or abnormally developed children in Gaul (7.76).¹³ There is also Antonius Castor, whom Pliny calls the most famous botanist of his time, in whose specimen-garden he learned much of what he knew about plants (25.9). This glowing citation is an example of what Pliny called (as we shall see) a 'loan repaid with interest,' marking his gratitude to the old botanist at the same time that it calls attention to the importance of his own connections. Similarly, we may see in the dedication of the *Naturalis Historia* to Titus the last link in this chain of transactions, a final exchange that rounds off the contributions of others and enacts, as Pliny hopes, a connection between himself and his ruler.

The Prodigal Text

As we have seen, Pliny is unusual among ancient writers in devoting a special portion of his book to listing his authorities. He justifies

¹¹ Syme (1969) 201–6.

¹² For an example of such authorities, see the article on Turranius Gracilis in *RE* 7A.2 col. 1442.

¹³ The parent of the abnormally developed boy in Gallia Belgica was Cornelius Tacitus, probably father of the historian; see Syme (1958) 60.

his practice with a metaphor that deserves analysis: *obnoxii profecto animi et infelicitis ingenii est deprehendi in furto malle quam mutuum reddere, cum praesertim sors fiat ex usura* ('Surely it is the mark of a slavish mind and an unhappy nature to prefer being detected in a theft to returning what you borrow, particularly when capital comes from the interest', *HN praef.* 23). The choice of a financial analogy to describe an author's relations with his sources has some striking implications. Deferring for the moment the puzzling question of 'capital coming from the interest,' I wish to examine the first premise of the metaphor, that to construct such a literary work as this, one must be either a borrower or a thief, and that a person of liberal status—such as our author must surely be—naturally prefers to borrow. Note that the terms in which we moderns imagine originality—the idea that authors are neither borrowers nor thieves, but creators—does not enter the question. This has some bearing on what readers have perceived as Pliny's own lack of originality. Nature is, as Pliny shows it, finite and changeless—we mortals may discover or forget things about her, but there is nothing new under the sun. In writing about nature, consequently, literary 'capital' is a finite and changeless sum, admitting neither creation nor destruction, merely redistribution from one author to another. This bears comparison with the views of other ancient writers on nature. Aelianus, for instance, rounds off his survey of the wonderful behaviour of animals by defending his lack of novelty:

εἰ ταῦτα εἶπον, ὅσα πάντες, ἢ οἱ γε πλείστοι, οὐπω δίκαιον αἰτιᾶσθαι·
ζῶα γὰρ αὐτὸς ἄλλα πλάσαι οὐκ ἠδυνάμην, ὅτι δὲ ἔργων πολλὰ ἐπεδειξάμην.
(Aelianus, *De Natura Animalium*, epilogue)

I cannot justly be criticised for repeating what all, or at any rate most, writers have said already. After all, I could not create other animals, though I have given evidence that I have known a great many.

Seneca, in a letter of advice to Lucilius on how he should go about writing a description of Mount Aetna, makes the point even clearer:

praeterea condicio optima est ultimi: parata uerba inuenit, quae aliter instructa nouam faciem habent. nec illis manus inicit tamquam alienis. sunt enim publica.

(Seneca, *Epistulae* 79.6)

He who writes last comes off best, for he finds the words ready to hand and, if he arranges them differently, they have the appearance of being new: nor is he laying hands on what belongs to another, since words are common property.

Common to both these passages is the assumption that the writer's task is not to *create* knowledge but to *arrange* it. Note the premise of this assumption: that the sum of knowledge is accessible and that there remain no significant obstacles to its collection. Such confidence in the knowability of the universe reflected an equal confidence in the universality of the Roman empire. The limits of the world and the limits of empire are the same; as Cicero said, *noster hic populus . . . cuius imperio iam orbis terrae tenetur* ('our nation . . . within whose authority the world is now contained', *Rep.* 3.15.24). To paraphrase the apocryphal boast of the Victorian sage Benjamin Jowett,¹⁴ what lay outside the limits of empire was not knowledge. Assuming that the sum of knowledge has been made available, gathered thus within the empire, what more is there to be added? For Pliny the art of describing nature would like in the art of collage, in the combination of previously existing pieces. This is after all the man who wrote *thesauros oportet esse, non libros* ('There ought to be, not books, but treasure-houses', *HN praef.* 17).

We have not finished unpacking Pliny's financial metaphor: there remains the question of repayment. What does Pliny mean when he says *sors fiat ex usura* ('Capital comes from the interest', *HN praef.* 23)? The money will not be coming to him: he is the borrower and it is the capital of someone else that will increase. We would expect Pliny to claim that he is repaying his loans because it is necessary or that by doing so he somehow benefits himself, but to claim that he repays his loans in order to benefit his *creditors* is unexpected, to say the least: being generous to your creditors does not rank very high in the modern list of civic virtues. Pliny's proclaimed lack of self-interest might strike us as odd or even naive. It would not have appeared so to a Roman.

For the Romans, as for us, lending and borrowing had moral as well as financial significance. Money transactions were an index to the characters of those who participated in them. To lend money at interest (*faenerari*) was not exactly consistent with a Roman noble's honour: the injunctions of the elder Cato against it had the status of proverbs,¹⁵ and embarrassed those aristocrats who did indulge in

¹⁴ In a Victorian undergraduate jingle reported by Morris (1968) 184: Here come I, my name is Jowett; / There's no knowledge but I know it, / I am the Master of this college. / What I know not isn't knowledge.

¹⁵ Cato, *Agr.* 1.1: *maiores nostri sic habuerunt et ita in legibus posuerunt, furem dupli con-*

usury. They had either to avoid the appearance of lending for outright gain¹⁶ or hide behind middlemen, as Brutus, most notoriously, employed intermediaries in lending money at forty-eight per cent interest to the town of Salamis in Cyprus, to Cicero's acute chagrin (Cic. *Att.* 5.21; 6.1). Behind this ethic lay a general principle of the proper use of wealth: to accumulate wealth in order to spend it for the enjoyment of others (as in a political career one normally spent one's wealth on feasts, spectacles, games, gifts, doles and public works) was a mark of nobility and so acceptable, a traditional way of getting public recognition. But to heap up wealth for its own sake was miserly and ignoble. Misers are constant figures of fun in Roman drama and satire, *avaritia* the recurrent object of moral writers' scorn. In the formulation of Florence Dupont, 'the miser cut himself off from other men, from civilization: he was *incultus*'.¹⁷ To spend for others, even if it meant incurring debts, was more noble in Roman eyes than to hold on to money for its own sake or to grub for it in some illiberal way. Plutarch's contrasting biographies of Crassus and Caesar make the ethics of spending and holding quite clear. Crassus was a man of great potential virtues, all of them overshadowed by his one vice: love of money. It was enough to hold him back from

demnari, feneratorum quadrupli. quanto peiorem ciuem existimarint feneratorum quam furem, hinc licet existimare. ('Our ancestors thus considered and effected it in laws, that a thief be fined at double rate, a money-lender (*faenerator*) quadruply. From this one can infer how much worse a citizen they thought the money-lender than the thief.') Cic. *Off.* 2.89: *ex quo genere comparationis illud est Catonis senis; a quo cum quaereretur quid maxime in re familiari expediret, respondit, 'bene pascere', quid secundum: 'satis bene pascere', quid tertium, 'male pascere', quid quartum: 'arare'. et cum ille qui quaesierat dixisset 'quid faenerari', tum Cato 'quid hominem' inquit 'occidere?'* ('When he was asked the best way of profiting one's estate, Cato answered, "Raising cattle well". The second best way? "Raising cattle moderately well." And third? "Raising cattle badly." And fourth? "Growing crops." When his inquirer asked, "What about money-lending (*faenerari*)?", Cato replied, "What about homicide?")' This anecdote is repeated by Columella (6 *praef.*) and Pliny (*HN* 18.29).

¹⁶ Atticus' loans are portrayed by his biographer as acts of philanthropy. See Nep. *Att.* 2.4–5: *cum enim uersuram facere publice necesse esset neque eius condicionem aequam haberent, semper se interposuit, atque ita, ut neque usuram umquam iniquam ab iis acceperit neque longius quam dictum esset debere passus sit. quod utrumque erat iis salutare; nam neque indulgendo inueterascere eorum aes alienum patiebatur neque multiplicandis usuris crescere.* ('When necessity compelled the Athenian state to borrow money and they could not get favourable terms, Atticus always came to their rescue and in such a way that he never took unfair interest from them nor let the loan go beyond the term agreed. Both circumstances were to their benefit: for he did not allow their debt to grow old by indulgence, nor to increase by accumulating interest.')

¹⁷ Dupont (1992) 33.

the public recognition he desired. Though in pursuit of public acclaim he spent sums that would have beggared anyone else, he never spent so as to reduce his personal wealth, for shortly before his death his fortune had grown from a beginning of 300 talents to 7,100 (Plut. *Crass.* 2.1). Plutarch's *Caesar*, on the other hand, dwells much on Caesar's vast borrowing and liberal spending. In quest of popularity Caesar ran up debts of 1,300 talents before he entered his first magistracy and as a junior magistrate he lavished so much of his money on roads, gladiatorial games, shows, parades and feasts that he eclipsed all his predecessors: *χρώμενος δὲ ταῖς δαπάναις ἀφειδῶς, καὶ δοκῶν μὲν ἐφήμερον καὶ βραχεῖαν ἀντικαταλλάττεσθαι μεγάλων ἀναλωμάτων δόξαν, ὠνούμενος δὲ ταῖς ἀληθείαις τὰ μέγιστα μικρῶν* ('Spending recklessly, he seemed to be buying a brief and passing fame at a great price, but in truth he was buying the greatest things of all for cheap', Plut. *Caes.* 5.8–9). For Plutarch, Crassus is absolutely hapless as a politician, his promising qualities overshadowed by his avarice, seduced by his unfulfilled desire for popularity into a foolish campaign that proved to be his death. Caesar, of course, is the type of the astute and successful politician: his early debts are cleared by the mature success that they have paid for, and Caesar, liberal even in death, leaves every Roman citizen a substantial gift (*Caes.* 68.1).

By describing his literary debts in the language of finance, Pliny evokes this very ethic of borrowing. He assimilates himself to the man who borrows in order to spend liberally for the public, the aristocrat who acquires only so that he may be prodigal with his store. He writes contemptuously of those who know but who out of envy never pass on their knowledge to others—scholars who will never become *auctores* (*ita certe recondunt qui pauca aliqua nouere, inuidentes aliis, et neminem docere in auctoritatem scientiae est*, 'Out of envy of others they hide away what little they do know and to increase the prestige of their knowledge instruct no one', *HN* 25.2). This is an aristocratic rather than a commercial model of exchange, in which the goal is not to increase the amount in the cash-box at the end of the day but to demonstrate one's greatness through munificent behaviour. The difference here is that the unit of exchange is not money, but facts. Pliny is not one to grub dishonourably for his stories; he borrows them nobly and returns them freely to those who gave them, with interest added in the form of fame—his citations. He does not husband his data jealously; instead, he spends them on us, his readers, with a prodigal hand.

In Plutarch's *Caesar* and *Crassus*, the language of credit and debt has a political meaning and for Cicero and both Plinys it describes the social logic of literary exchange. As there is an economy of fame, so there is also an economy of story. It is not surprising that in the *Naturalis Historia*, Pliny also uses this economic language to describe man's relations with Nature; for example, he praises the Earth's beneficence to man in a way that may seem paradoxical, making man the lender and Earth the debtor:

at haec benigna, mitis, indulgens, ususque mortalium semper ancilla,
 quae coacta generat, quae sponte fundit, quos odores saporisque, quos
 sucos, quos tactus, quos colores! quam bona fide creditum faenus reddit!
 (Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 2.55)

But she, kindly, gentle, indulgent, always the handmaid of mortals,
 what does she produce under compulsion or pour out voluntarily, what
 perfumes and flavours, what juices, what things to touch, what colours!
 How faithfully does she return the *faenus* lent to her!

The *faenus*¹⁸ here is of course a metaphor for seed, which Earth gives back as crops. It may seem strange that Earth should be described as in man's debt, but Earth is for Pliny yet another and perhaps the ultimate example of that traditional aristocrat, the honourable debtor who repays her lenders with lavish interest. It is simply a matter of seeing the more honoured member of the equation in the debtor's position.

Aristocratic Geography

A similar application of economic metaphors to nature explains a persistent feature of the geographical books of the *Naturalis Historia*: Pliny's geography is fascinated by rivers and mountains above all other topographical features and obsessed with fame. This is a geography that endows rivers and mountains with the fascination of poetry or paradoxography. There is an economy of fame for rivers too. In the geographical enumerations in the table of contents of the *Naturalis Historia*, mountains and rivers are always listed as *clarus* ('famous') and they are the only geographical features so described there. But

¹⁸ *Faenus* here seems to mean capital lent on interest; cf. Plaut. *Mostell.* 3.1.101.

Pliny scatters the words *clarus* and *nobilis* around in a manner that seems promiscuous and often inexplicable when one is speaking of geographical phenomena. This is a habit of other Roman writers, for instance, Curtius Rufus,¹⁹ but Pliny takes it to unusual lengths. What did it mean for a writer to assert that a mountain or river was famous?

For the Romans, rivers were of great religious and symbolic significance. In the religious life of Rome, as is well documented, rivers were divine beings, their cult old and widespread.²⁰ The rivers of the frontier lands were recognised by the Romans as divinities and accorded cult²¹ and barbarian river-gods were prominent among the apparatus of the Roman triumph. By metonymy, rivers were also bearers of cultural identity both for Rome itself and for foreign lands. The ideological weight that rivers could bear is plain in the traditional, autocratic language with which the Tiber is invested by Ennius, Virgil and others,²² and also in the iconography of military culture. Iconographically, Trajan domesticated the river Danube and took it into service for his campaigns in Dacia. On Trajan's column, Father Danube complacently watches the arrival of the legions in Dacia. Coins show him reclining happily in the classic pose of a river-god,²³ or wrestling Dacia (a robed female) to the ground.²⁴ A sestertius of 104–6 advertises the Dacian campaigns with the image of the bridge Trajan had thrown over the Danube.²⁵ For Servius, Virgil's image

¹⁹ E.g., Curt. 8.9.3: *plana sunt cetera, multisque inclitis amnibus Caucaso monte ortis placidum per campos iter praebent*. ('The rest of India, which is flat, affords serene passage to many famous rivers arising from Mount Caucasus.')

²⁰ The worship of rivers is sufficiently central to the Romans' image of themselves for Virgil to assign the foundation of the cult of the Tiber to Aeneas (*Aen.* 8.71–8). See, in general, Wissowa (1912) 119–225. Noteworthy among the many testimonia are the worship of the Numicus in connection with Aeneas as Jupiter Indiges (Dion. Hal. 1.64); The cult of springs is attested in Suet. *Aug.* 57. Sources describing votive deposits of coins at the springs of Vicarello on Lake Bracciano are *CIL* 11.3286–290 and Henzen (1854) 20–8.

²¹ Most notably, many Roman inscriptions invoke the gods of the Danube and the Rhine. Inscriptions invoking Danuvius: *CIL* 3.3416, 5863, 10263, 10395, 11894, 14359; inscriptions invoking Rhenus: *CIL* 13.5255, 7790–1, 8810–11.

²² Enn. *Ann. frag.* 63 (Skutsch [1985] 75): *fluvius qui est omnibus princeps* ('the river that is most eminent of all'; Virg. *Aen.* 8.77: *regnator aquarum* ('sovereign of waters'); an unnamed orator quoted by Fronto (van den Hout [1988] 158): *Tiber amnis et dominus et fluentium circa regnator aquarum* ('The river Tiber, both lord and sovereign of circumfluent waters').

²³ *BMC* 3.15 no. 16.

²⁴ *BMC* 3.28 no. 8, 3.29 no. 1.

²⁵ *BMC* 3.32 no. 1.

of the Araxes, the Armenian river that resents the bridge thrown across its stream (*Aen.* 8.728) is a magnification of the glory of Augustus, the legendary bridge of the river (Serv. *ad Aen.* 8.728). Metaphorically, the connection of the river and its territory is very close: mastering the river is taking the territory. Certain rivers were to be mastered, their courses explored, their springs discovered, and the task was one for persons of the highest dignity. Lucan makes the quest for the source of the Nile a long-standing desire for kings like Cambyses and Alexander; under Nero, the search for the springs of the Nile was actually a matter of imperial policy, (Plin. *HN* 6.181; Sen. *Q.Nat.* 6.8.3–4) and it seems entirely fitting that in Strabo (7.1.5) the man whose eyes first uncovered the source of the Danube, penetrating the natural fortifications of the Hercynian Forest, was Tiberius, the emperor-to-be.

In Pliny's survey of the *orbis terrarum*, rivers have two functions. They are, first of all, lines that mark boundaries, separating one space from another. These are rivers as frontiers, rivers, we may say, as seen by a mapmaker. Although the idea of river as boundary has implicit within it the idea of river as barrier, Pliny never deals with rivers as physical obstacles to motion. Unlike, to cite the obvious example, the *Commentarii* of Caesar, Pliny seldom describes a river from the perspective of someone trying to cross it. He never mentions fords and rarely speaks of bridges.²⁶ Instead, he represents rivers as means of travel, as connections between places. They are the rails on which his geographical narrative slides. This is the second function of rivers in Pliny's survey: as roads, itineraries in themselves. In Pliny's descriptions of rivers, the adjectives *meabilis* ('suitable for passage') and *naugabilis* ('navigable') occur again and again.²⁷ These are rivers as seen from a boat.

It is in this aspect that rivers reveal their fugitive cunning and devious fluidity—the basis for their fame. The movement of a river from spring to sea is a story: it permits the insertion of narrative into geography. With rivers, geographical description approaches biography. For Pliny rivers are elusive, tricky and hard to get hold of. Rivers are never at a loss; by definition, a river knows the way

²⁶ When bridges are mentioned in books 3–6, it is as an index of the importance of a given town, for example, the town of Zeugma ('bridge') on the Euphrates, *transitu Euphratis nobile* ('famous as a place for crossing the Euphrates', 5.86).

²⁷ See Beagon (1992) 194–5 for Pliny's use of *naugabilis* for rivers.

through. Descriptions of rivers must reflect their evasive nature. The supreme instance of this is Pliny's account of the Nile, which is an expert at evading detection as well as at worming its way through formidable obstacles: faced with having to flow through places 'sandy and waste' on its way from Mauretania to Egypt, the Nile twice drops underground and flows beneath the sand, the second time for a journey of twenty days, until it reaches Aethiopia, where it is called back to the surface by the presence of humans (5.51–2). Despite all of the detail Pliny gives us in this section, he disclaims having complete knowledge of the source of the Nile and modestly reports only as much as King Juba of Mauretania has been able to discover: *Nilus incertis ortus fontibus . . . originem, ut Iuba rex potuit exquirere, in monte inferioris Mauretaniae non procul oceano habet lacu protinus stagnante, quem uocant Niliden* ('The Nile, rising from springs unknown . . . has its origin, as far as King Juba could learn, in a mountain of Lower Mauretania not far from Ocean, and immediately collects in a still pool called Nilides', 5.51). Although what he knows about the river's source is actually quite detailed (the mountain is not far from Ocean; the lake Nilides is stagnant; the crocodiles in this lake prove its identity with the Egyptian Nile), Pliny repeats the formula 'rising from springs unknown' like a magic formula. For Pliny to claim absolute certainty here would not be decent. To know the sources of the Nile is, as Lucan made clear not too long before Pliny, one of the prerogatives of absolute power, the ambition of tyrants and emperors, a demonstration of control over the world up to its farthest edge. A mark of Alexander's overweening ambition is that *ambissetque polos Nilumque fonte bibisset* ('He would have circled the axes of the world and drunk the Nile from its spring' (10.40); a little later in the same book Lucan makes Caesar claim *spes sit mihi certa uidendi/Niliacos fontes, bellum civile relinquam* ('If I had a certain chance of seeing the Nile's springs, I would leave the civil war behind', 191–2)—that is, the mastery implicit in this knowledge is a satisfactory substitute for domination of Rome; finally, the Egyptian priest Acoreus tells us that Caesar's desire puts him in the same company as Alexander, Sesostris and Cambyses (268–82), although the river's *natura latendi* ('natural power of hiding') always defeated even these conquerors. In the case of the Nile, then, it is not a desirable thing, even for a surveyor of the world like Pliny, to have defeated the river's cunning. In his essay on the Nile (*Q. Nat.* 4A) Seneca does not go farther toward its source than Meroë (which he calls Philae). Although Seneca's

stated purpose is to account for the Nile's flooding by tracking down its source, he diverts the progress of his essay into digressions on ethnography, agriculture and the crocodile. The Nile must remain elusive: this is the reason for its fame. To rob the river of its elusiveness, its fame, is to arrogate a fame equivalent to it. To assert control over the Nile is perhaps possible for an emperor (although this would have to be over Lucan's objections), but for a private citizen, it is not even thinkable.

When Pliny describes a 'famous' river like the Nile, it is in a narrative of set pattern, a report of the river's life from its source to its discharge into the sea, and these narratives glory in changes of shape and name, sudden descents into the underground and surprising emergences miles away. From a practical point of view, of course, the progress of a river is Pliny's primary means of surveying a country's interior and listing the places it passes and the frontiers it defines. But rivers also deserve to have their life-stories told: they possess individual characters; they acquire property; and they exchange things with humanity.

Pliny's stories about rivers that share channels without mingling their waters demonstrate that rivers are individuals.²⁸ His account of the Tigris is quite typical of such river-narratives, only more detailed—the Tigris flows through another river, a lake, a mountain, and a change of name without surrendering its identity:

oritur in regione Armeniae Maioris . . . ipsi qua tardior fluit Diglito; unde concitatur, a celeritate Tigris incipit uocari: ita appellant Medi sagittam. influit in lacum Aretissam, omnia inlata pondera sustinentem et nitrum nebulis exhalantem. unum genus ei piscium est, idque transcurrentis non miscetur alueo, sicut neque e Tigri pisces in lacum transnatant. fertur autem et cursu et colore dissimilis transuectusque occurrente Tauro monte in specum mergitur subterque lapsus a latere altero eius erumpit. locus uocatur Zoaranda; eundem esse manifestum, quod demersa perfert . . . tam uicinum Arsaniae fluere eum in regione Arrhene Claudius Caesar auctor est, ut, cum intumescere, confluent nec tamen misceantur, leuiorque Arsania innatet MMMM ferme spatio, mox diuisus in Euphraten mergatur.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 6.127–8)

²⁸ The most famous of such rivers is perhaps the Peneus (*HN* 4.30), whose refusal to mingle its waters with a river from the Underworld is noted by Homer at *Il.* 2.751–5.

It rises in a region of Greater Armenia . . . while its current is still rather slow it is called the Diglitus, but where it flows faster it begins to be called the Tigris from its swiftness—for ‘tigris’ is the Median word for arrow. It flows into Lake Aretissa, which bears up all heavy bodies that are thrown into it and breathes out nitrous fumes. There is one species of fish in the lake and it does not enter the current of the river as it flows across, and by the same token the fish of the Tigris do not swim out into the lake; the river hastens through, unlike in colour and in course. When it has completed its passage, encountering Mount Taurus it plunges into a hollow where it sinks underground, then bursts out from the other side. This place is called Zoaranda: that the river is the same is evident because it carries through whatever has been cast into it. . . . The Emperor Claudius holds that in the neighbourhood of Arrhene it runs so close to the river Arsianias that when both have flooded they flow together but do not join their streams, the Arsianias, which is lighter, swimming atop the Tigris for almost four miles and then breaking away to be mingled in the Euphrates.

Like the Jordan (*HN* 5.71–2), the Tigris flows into a vaporous, inhospitable lake, but unlike the Jordan, which fails signally in its attempt to find a way through, the Tigris survives the ordeal intact, continuing on to the sea, its proper destination. Like the Nile (5.51–2), it drops out of sight repeatedly, but always vindicates its identity by the unity of its contents (or, in the case of the Nile, of its fauna). This is a narrative about the mysterious nature of identity: the river is threatened again and again with immobility (Mount Taurus), disappearance (beneath the ground) or dispersion (into other waters), but inevitably retains its continuity and unity.

That rivers should have distinct identities makes the submission of one river to another (in those cases when waters do actually intermingle) a real matter of prestige, which Pliny emphasises by always including a catalogue of tributaries in his river-narratives. One river acquires another as a person acquires real property. These tributaries, rivers that themselves possess prestige (tributaries are often specified to be *clari*),²⁹ in their vassalage increase the larger river’s status. Rivers have fame, which is to say definite standing in a socially ordered system of value. Rivers can be *magnificus* (‘splendid’; the Sebou, *HN* 5.5) and *clarus* (‘famous’; *flumina clara*: book 1, indices to books 3–6; *amnes clari*: the rivers of Germany, 4.100). In fact, rivers can even behave as monarchs or as states themselves. To move from

²⁹ For example, tributaries of the Danube (*HN* 3.147) and of the Tigris (6.129).

the rivers of foreigners to another Italian river, let us examine Pliny's description of the Po:

Padus, e gremio Vesuli montis celsissimum in cacumen Alpium elati finibus Ligurum Bagiennorum uisendo fonte profluens condensque se cuniculo et in Forouibiensium agro iterum exoriens, nullo amnium claritate inferior, Graecis dictus Eridanus ac poena Phaethontis inlustratus, augetur ad canis ortus liquatis niuibis, agris quam nauigiis torrentior, nihil tamen ex rapto sibi uindicans atque, ubi liquit, ubertate largitor. CCC p. a fonte addens meatu duo de LXXXX nec amnes tantum Appenninos Alpinosque nauigabiles capiens, sed lacus quoque inmenosos in eum sese exonerantes, omni numero XXX flumina in mare Hadriaticum defert, celeberrima ex iis Appennini latere Iactum, Tanarum, Trebiam, Placentium, Tarum, Inciam, Gabellum, Scultennam, Rhenum, Alpium uero Sturam, Orgum, Durias duas, Sesitem, Ticinum, Labrum, Adduam, Ollium, Mincium. nec alius amnium tam breui spatio maioris incrementi est.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 3.117–19)

From a spring that well repays seeing, the Po streams out of the bosom of Mount Vesulus, an eminence in the highest elevations of the Alps in the territory of the Ligurian Bagienni. Concealing itself in a cavity of the earth, it rises again in the land of Forum Vibii. In fame it yields to no other river: the Greeks called it Eridanus and the punishment of Phaethon magnified its reputation. At the rising of the Dogstar it swells with melting snow and though it exercises violence more against the fields than shipping, the river claims no plunder for itself, lavishing fertility where it deposits its booty. To a distance of three hundred miles from its spring it adds eighty-eight by wandering, and it not only receives navigable rivers from the Alps and Appenines but even immense lakes that discharge into it as well. It carries to the Adriatic thirty rivers in all, the most famous of which are the following: from the Appenine side, the Iactus; the Tanarus; the Trebia of Placentia; the Tarus; the Incia; the Gabellus; the Scultenna; and the Rhenus; from the Alps, the Stura; the Orgus; the two Durias; the Sesites; the Ticinus; the Lambrus; the Addua, the Ollius and the Mincius. No other river grows so much in such a brief course.

Why pay a visit to the source of the Po? If we compare this account to the younger Pliny's famous description of a visit to the source of the Clitumnus (*Ep.* 8.8) we see that rivers in Latin literature are themselves readable. The spring is an index to the river's character: the nature of the spring determines the significance of the river.³⁰ It

³⁰ The Tiber, for example, says of his own spring: *hic mihi magna domus, celsis caput*

is not permitted to read the Po as the product of multiple sources, each contributing equally to the river: the Po has one spring and many tributaries. It is not difficult to recognise in the list of the Po's tributaries a structural similarity with the list of subject nations in the *Res Gestae* of Augustus or for that matter with tribes inscribed on a triumphal arch in the Alps that Pliny quotes only a few pages later,³¹ an arch marking the boundary that the Po itself once marked, the southern limit of the Alps. The Po is no longer the border of the Alps, but now, incorporated into the homeland of the empire,³² as Tacitus says (*Hist.* 2.17: *florentissimum Italiae latus, quantum inter Padum Alpisque camporum et urbium*, 'the plains and cities between the Po and the Alps, the most prosperous region of Italy'), it has a new importance. The description of the river as a benevolent tyrant (*nihil tamen ex raptō sibi vindicans atque, ubi liquit, ubertate largitor*, 'claiming from its plunder nothing for itself, generously lavishing fertility', *HN* 3.117) has an imperial flavour in its suggestion of taxes levied and revenues spent, for this river is as much a participant in the commercial life of the countryside as it is a road from the Alps to the sea: *Pado patri* ('Father Po'), it is called on a votive inscription found near a village on what was once the river's ancient bank.³³ Exchanging the fertility of some fields for the soil of others, the Po partakes in the economic maintenance of the communities that border it, like the Jordan (*HN* 5.71) and the Tiber (3.54–5).³⁴ The description is as political as the river is big, precisely because what is being described is a big river, the greatest river in a place that was once a borderland of

urbibus exit ('Here is my great habitation, my source issues among lofty cities', Virg. *Aen.* 8.65).

³¹ *HN* 3.136–7: *Imp. Caesari diui filio Aug. pont. max., imp. XIV, tr. pot. XVII, S.P.Q.R., quod eius ductu auspiciisque gentes Alpinae omnes quae a mari sup̄ero ad inferum pertinebant sub imperium p.R. sunt redactae. Gentes Alpinae deuictae Triumpilini, Camunni, Venostes...* ('The senate and people of Rome [dedicate this arch] to the emperor Caesar, son of a god, Augustus, Supreme Pontiff, Supreme Commander for the fourteenth year, holder of Tribunician Power for the seventeenth year, as under his leadership and auspices all the nations of the Alps from the Adriatic Sea to the Ligurian Sea were subdued to the authority of the Roman people. Alpine nations conquered: Triumpilini, Camunni, Venostes...'). The list continues with forty-four more tribal names.

³² And is the homeland of Pliny himself, born at Comum in Cisalpine Gaul.

³³ *ILS* 3903. *Pater* ('father') is the honorific traditional to river-gods; see Verg. *Georg.* 4.369; *Aen.* 7.685, 8.540.

³⁴ The Tiber confers on Rome not only economic advantages (because of its navigability), but also aesthetic and religious ones: its banks are pleasant for villas and its floods give Rome omens (*HN* 3.54–5).

Italy and is now an integral and commercially important part of it. What Pliny notices about this big river, the questions that he asks of it, and his presentation of the answers are all determined by the concerns of his political life as a Roman.

Conclusion

A plunderer, but also a prodigal, ambitious to keep no booty for itself: a formulation, as we have seen, appropriate not only to the river Po, but also to the *Naturalis Historia*. Pliny's book is the record of an unprecedented attempt to make negotiable a wealth of knowledge then accessible for the first time, and it was Roman power that had articulated the world and its centuries of learning for his encyclopaedic project. So Pliny describes the world as laid open, as it were, to a Roman eye, rendered interpretable in every particular to a single, imperial system of meaning:

immensa Romanae pacis maiestate non homines modo diuersis inter se terris gentibusque, uerum etiam montes et excedentia in nubes iuga partusque eorum et herbas quoque inuicem ostentante! aeternum, quaeso, deorum sit munus istud! adeo Romanos uelut alteram lucem dedisse rebus humanis uidentur.

(Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 27.2–3)

The limitless grandeur of the Roman peace displays by turns not only humans with their different lands and nations, but even mountains and eminences that rise to the clouds . . . So truly do the gods seem to have given the Romans to mankind like a second source of daylight.

The encyclopedist looks at the world and describes what he sees in the light of empire. If, as Pliny claimed in his preface, it was the enormous variety of *Natura* that demanded the encyclopaedic scope of his work, it was the power of Rome that allowed him to execute that design. In former times the world was unknown to itself, closed off by war and piracy and parcelled into separate kingdoms, but now it is at last available for knowing, collected under a single *imperium* and an emperor zealous for the advancement of knowledge (*HN* 2.117–8). Now in Pliny's book the world is summoned up and sent on a slow name-by-name procession beneath the eye of its ruler.

But it is not the case that imperial power has made the world available to the text in a simple and unmediated way. As we have

seen, the text draws more heavily on literary tradition than on the author's direct experience of the world; in fact, it makes its indebtedness to other writers the object of proud display. In this respect the *Naturalis Historia* shows itself to be deeply conservative, assimilating itself to the moral world of aristocrats in the late Roman republic. This aristocratic ethos is, as we have seen, evident in the conceptual framework of Pliny's geography, in the application of fame as a descriptive criterion to rivers; his descriptions of them can seem like biographies of the political achievements of the ruling class. But it is evident also in the way the text collects and presents knowledge. Pliny's careful enumeration of his authorities recreates a network of exchanges of story similar to Cicero's literary friendships. His citations of literary sources concretely express the relative positions of his sources, his book and his readers in a hierarchy of tradition and power. By borrowing so extensively, Pliny spends himself into a vast literary debt; by proclaiming his dependence, he passes on this indebtedness to the reader, putting us into his debt. The vast, distended body of the *Naturalis Historia* is the mark of its profligate ambition: it intends to spend its way to fame.

12. A RELIGION FOR THE EMPIRE

Clifford Ando

Introduction

The Flavian municipal law has been called remarkable for what it omits: the extant chapters make no allusion to priests and no reference to the concrete actions of the provincial governor or the emperor.¹ It is also remarkable for what it takes for granted. Consider, for example, the oath stipulated for town magistrates. Each was to swear openly ‘in an assembly by Jupiter, the divine Augustus, the divine Claudius, the divine Vespasian Augustus, the divine Titus Augustus, the *genius* (the divine, guardian spirit) of *imperator* Caesar Domitian Augustus and the *dei Penates* (ancestral gods of the state, linked in Julio-Claudian myth with the household of Aeneas)’ (*in contione per Iouem et diuom Aug[ustum] et diuom Claudium et diuom Vespasianum Aug[ustum] et diuom Titum Aug[ustum] et genium imp[eratoris] Caesaris Domitiani Aug[usti] deosque Penates se*) that he would act in accordance with the law and in the best interest of the town (*Lex Irmitana* 26; cf. G, 59, 69, 73).² Similarly, while the law almost undoubtedly allowed decurions to establish their city’s official calendar anew each year, it presumes that among the *feriae* (‘holidays’) of each city will be days set aside *propter uenerationem domus Augustae* (‘for the veneration of the imperial house’, *Lex Irmitana* 31; cf. 79, 90, 92).³ These clauses have analogs in earlier municipal legislation and so they have a place in the history of Roman governance both in its extension into municipal life and in its acculturative effects.⁴ But the presence of Jupiter and the

¹ Galsterer (1987) 79–80, 87.

² I cite the *Lex Irmitana* and the *Lex Malacitana* from González (1986) 147–243. On the relationship of extant laws to a postulated *Lex Flavia Municipalis*, see Galsterer (1987) 181–203; Galsterer (1988) 83.

³ Rüpke (1995) 544–5; Scheid (1999b) 390–3.

⁴ For control of the calendar at Urso, see *Lex Coloniae Genetivae* 70–1, 128; for the oath and the location in which it should be administered, see *Lex Coloniae Genetivae* 81; *Tabula Bantina* 17–18, 24; cf. Thomas (1990) 146 n. 19. On the social- and religious-historical importance of municipal legislation, see Galsterer (1987) 181–203; Galsterer (1988) 78–90; Scheid (1999b) 381–423; Ando (forthcoming a).

dei Penates in Irni, Malaca and Salpensa also presents a theological problem, for these were cities of Latin status and, if the Romans knew anything about the *dei Penates*, it was that they were worshipped at Lavinium, where they themselves had chosen to reside.⁵

The list of gods charged with superintending the magistrates of Flavian municipalities should surprise us at least as much as the presence of the Capitoline triad at Urso. And, to be sure, the spread of peculiarly Roman cults has long been studied as one part of the formation of Roman *Reichsreligion*, but scholars have generally assumed that it was not Jupiter or the *Penates* but the emperor who provided the empire with its only shared deity.⁶ This assumption has historically rested on one or both of two subsidiary claims. First, Roman cult of the late republic was devoid of true—read ‘personal’—religious significance and its effective domain was that of politics. Hence Roman paganism survived and flourished under the empire *as* imperial cult only because it had long since abandoned its agricultural, domestic roots and become a formal, secular *Loyalitätsreligion*.⁷ Secondly, Graeco-Roman religion was properly the religion of the *polis* and the structures and concerns of any particular religion—its priesthoods, participants and liturgies—were homologous with the social and political structures of its city-state.⁸ The application of this model to the Roman empire is doubly problematic. On the one hand, the

⁵ Val. Max. 1.8.7: *Referam nunc quod suo saeculo cognitum manavit ad posteros, penetrales deos Aeneam Troia aduectos Lauini conlocasse: inde ab Ascanio filio eius Albam, quam ipse considerat, translato pristinum sacrarium repetisse, et quia id humana manu factum existimari poterat, relatos Albam uluntatem suam altero transitu significasse* (‘I will now relate something known in its own time, which has been passed down the generations: Aeneas settled at Lavinium the *dei penetrales* [household gods] that he had brought from Troy; then, when they had been moved to Alba by Ascanius his son, who founded that city, they sought out their ancient repository; since it was considered possible that this had been the work of human hands, they were carried back to Alba and displayed their will by a second return.’). For the connection of the *dei penetrales* to the *dei Penates*, see Dion. Hal. 1.67.1–3; *Scholia Vetustiora ad Juv. Sat.* 4.60 (cf. *ad Juv. Sat.* 12.70); Serv. *ad Aen.* 1.270, 3.12; *Origo Gentis Romanae* 17.2–3. On the *Penates* in general, see Dubourdieu (1989); on their worship at Lavinium, see Dubourdieu (1989) 219–29, 319–61; and esp. Thomas (1990) 143–70.

⁶ Fears (1981a) 3–141 is an important exception; Goodman (1994b) 20–37 is one of the few attempts to explain this in religious—albeit Christianising religious—terms.

⁷ Warde Fowler (1911); Beaujeu (1955) 28–9; Latte (1960) 25–6, 31–2. Scheid (1985) 95–127 is perhaps the most sophisticated essay of this kind.

⁸ Sourvinou-Inwood (2000a) 13–37; Sourvinou-Inwood (2000b) 38–55; Frankfurter (1998) 33–6 (cf. 97–144); Woolf (1997) 71–7.

binarisms inherent in it, between public and private and centre and periphery, necessarily situate diaspora cults and imperial cult in competition with or in opposition to traditional religion.⁹ And on the other, its relevance to the new political and religious reality of a united Mediterranean is far from obvious, not least because the nature and function of cities and conduct of municipal life under a universal empire were hotly contested issues already in antiquity.¹⁰

The tension between Roman centre and peripheral municipalities at the level of patriotism and political philosophy had analogs in religious thought and practice and it is at this point of rupture that the explanatory power of *polis*-religion might best be tested.¹¹ In devising such a test, we would do well to consult ancient theorists of *polis*-religion and to consider the challenges that confronted their theoretical and theological presuppositions as the social and political structures of the Graeco-Roman city-state evolved in the larger, ecumenical community of the early empire. Romans at Rome had long developed sophisticated and self-conscious mechanisms both for importing and naturalising foreign cults and for sanctioning and controlling the religious life of subject populations.¹² In situating gods in time and place, this body of theory and law may have facilitated and explained the

⁹ North (1992) 174–93 and Rives (1995) 173–249 attempt to explain the gradual demise of *polis*-religion in the larger community of the empire: religious identity became less politically charged just as increasingly cosmopolitan societies atomised individuals and presented them with more choices to which to adhere. The argument, both in North's model and Rives' application, begs serious questions. Gordon (1990) 235–55 provides a powerful argument for the continued vitality of civic religion under the empire and therefore for the continuing usefulness of the *polis*-religion model.

¹⁰ There are, of course, other ways to unpack the history of histories of Roman religion: Smith (1990) 1–53 concentrates on the Protestant, Christian roots of religious studies; Scheid (1987) 303–25 traces interdependence of hostility to polytheism and charges of formalism; while Durand and Scheid (1994) 23–43 and Bremmer (1998) 9–32 discuss the influence of late nineteenth-century anthropology on twentieth-century studies of Graeco-Roman paganism. There have been few studies of Roman religion, and fewer still of imperial cult, that have not been loosely functionalist.

¹¹ Cities in political life and thought under the empire: Ando (1999) 5–34 and Ando (2000) 406–12, summarising a long argument. For a very different view of the effectiveness of ancient communicative practice, see Bendlin (1997) 38–44. On Roman interference in local religious life, see Bendlin (1997) 54–63; Frateantonio (1997) 85–97; Beard, North and Price (1998) 211–44; de Casanove (2000) 71–6.

¹² On Roman interaction with foreign religions see Wissowa (1912) 38–60, who perhaps overestimates the historical value of late republican theological taxonomies that were even then inscribed in religious-historical narratives; Wissowa (1916–1919) 1–49; Scheid (1995) 424–32; Scheid (1998) 168–82; Cancik (1999) 161–73.

removal of cults and cult-objects to Rome; it may likewise have rendered it difficult or impossible to export any particular Roman cult to the empire at large.

The Roman Peace and the Diaspora Cults

The Mediterranean world in the Flavian period was integrated as never before.¹³ This can be studied in a number of ways: trade, migration, communication and, as a special example of the latter two, the spread of diaspora cults. In each of these areas we must observe and attempt to control the bias of our literary sources. Aelius Aristides, for example, praised Rome for its receipt of all the goods of the world, as though all trade passed to the capitol like the spokes of a wheel (*Or.* 26.11). The elder Pliny, on the other hand, considered the empire-wide trade in medicinal plants one of the crowning glories of the Roman achievement: thanks to the 'immense majesty of Roman peace' (*immensa Romanae pacis maiestate*), such plants are transported *ultro citroque humanae salutis in toto orbe* ('here and there throughout the world, for the health of humankind'). 'Thus do the gods seem to have given the Romans to human affairs, like a second sun' (*adeo Romanos uelut alteram lucem dedisse rebus humanis uidentur*, Plin. *HN* 27.3; see also *HN* 14.2).¹⁴ The actual dynamics of early imperial trade were far more complex.¹⁵

The same bias bedevils the study of migration, travel and tourism.¹⁶ Not only do most *testimonia* concern the flow of eastern migrants into Rome, they deplore it. Juvenal's famous lament that 'the Syrian Orontes flows into the Tiber and dumps therein its language and customs, its badly strung harps, horns and foreign drums, and the girls who sell themselves by the Circus' is but one voice in a chorus that grew more shrill as the tide rose and won (*Sat.* 3.62–65; cf. Sen. *Dial.* 6.2–4, also employing a compound of *fluere* ('to flow') metaphorically; Tac. *Ann.* 15.44.3, writing of Rome that in it *cuncta*

¹³ Shaw (2000) 361–403, whose investigation presupposes a notionally unified empire; cf. Ando (2000) 131–74, 303–35.

¹⁴ On this aspect of the Roman achievement in ancient thought, see Ando (2000) 54, 347–8, 389.

¹⁵ Harris (2000) 710–31 and Andreau (2000) 784–6, both citing earlier work.

¹⁶ On migration see Cracco Ruggini (1980) 55–76; Frier (2000) 808–11; Noy (2000); on tourism see Foertmeyer (1989).

undique atrocitas aut pudenda confluunt celebranturque, 'every sort of crime and disgraceful activity flows from everywhere else into the city and is practised there'). Athenaeus is almost alone in celebrating the capital as 'an encapsulation of the world' (τὴν 'Ρώμην πόλιν ἐπιτομὴν τῆς οἰκουμένης) precisely because one could count so many individual cities within the οὐρανόπολις ('the heavenly city') of Rome, where ὅλα ἔθνη ('entire nations') settle, each in its own place (Athenaeus 1.20c–d).¹⁷ But we would do well to remember that not all migrants were voluntary nor did they all travel to Rome.¹⁸ The resolution of the Jewish war produced 97,000 (Joseph. *Bj* 6.420); already under Tiberius the senate had sent to Sardinia some four thousand slaves 'infected' with Jewish and Egyptian superstitions and two generations later under Nero Cassius Longinus would claim that Roman households contained 'entire nations of slaves, practising diverse cults and foreign rites, or none at all' (*nationes in familiis . . . in quibus diuersi ritus, externa sacra aut nulla sunt*, Tac. *Ann.* 2.85.4, 14.44.3).

The political stability and social order that allowed migration and trade to reach new heights also supported the spread of cults, most famously those of eastern origin: Cybele, Isis, Atargatis, Mithras, Jupiter Dolichenus and Christ. This, too, became a *topos* of imperial literature. Lucian's Menippus, for example, flew to heaven, only to find himself seated next to Pan, the Corybantes, Attis and Sabazius, 'foreign and dubious gods' (*Icar.* 27), while his Momus found the council of the gods attended by Attis, Corybas, Sabazius, Mithras, Anubis and Apis (*Deor. Conc.* 9–10). Their astonishment was matched only by their dismay. Christians took a more positive view: Christ had appeared in the reign of Augustus so that his worship might spread more rapidly through a unified world.¹⁹

The importance of the diaspora cults in the Flavian period would be easy to overestimate. They once loomed large in histories of imperial religion. Looking for precursors to Christianity, scholars postulated a category of 'oriental' or 'mystery' cults that commingled

¹⁷ Cf. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.19.3: καίπερ μυρίων ὄσων εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἐληλυθότων ἔθνων, οἷς πολλὴ ἀνάγκη σέβειν τοὺς πατρίους θεοὺς τοῖς οἰκοθεν νομίμοις, οὐδενὸς εἰς ζῆλον ἐλήλυθε τῶν ξενικῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ἢ πόλις δημοσίᾳ ('Although innumerable races have immigrated to the city, each of which must worship its ancestral gods according to the customs of their native lands, the city itself has avoided adopting publicly any of these foreign rites.' On immigrant communities in early imperial Rome, see MacMullen (1993) 47–64.

¹⁸ Harris (1980) 117–40; Andreau (2000) 721–2.

¹⁹ Ando (2000) 48 n. 148.

soteriological messages with private, personal initiations.²⁰ As scholars have studied them in greater detail, their similarities have faded and their significance as a category has correspondingly diminished.²¹ What is more, these cults travelled with immigrants and so moved largely through shipping lanes; their worship was largely confined to cities and was far more common in Italy than elsewhere in the west.²² But their dispersion, however quantitatively or geographically limited, nevertheless makes them the other to the locative cults of Graeco-Roman city-states. We need not be surprised that the diffusion of the mystery cults exhibits a pattern, nor is the pattern itself unexpected. It is the mere fact of their diffusion, in a world of *poleis* and *polis*-religions, that requires explanation.

For a cult to spread, several factors must converge.²³ First, the relationship between its god or goddess and material reality, in the form of both landscape and cult object, must be of a kind that permits him or her to be in many places at once. In other words, a cult needs to presuppose theories of materiality, representation and immanence that allowed worship to have meaning even for practitioners aware of the potential and perhaps of the real, simultaneous replication of their liturgy in multiple locations.²⁴ Extant narratives of the arrival of Cybele in Rome, for example, stress that the Romans brought from Pessinus 'the stone that the natives said *was* the goddess' (*lapidem quam matrem deum esse incolae dicebant*, Livy 29.11.7). If the *baitulos* that arrived in Rome in 204 bc in some irreducible and exclusive way was the goddess, Cybele's precinct at Pessinus should have closed or, at least, diminished in importance. It did neither. Recognising further hypostases beyond or between the divine and

²⁰ Burkert (1987) 1–3; Smith (1990) 31–3, 43–5, esp. 55–84.

²¹ Smith (1990) 116–43; Turcan (1996) 3–9; cf. Burkert (1987) 30–53.

²² See Malaise (1972) 159–70, 255–354 and Malaise (1984) on Egyptian cults in Italy and the western provinces; Stark (1996) 129–45 on Christianity. Turcan (1996) discusses the spread of each cult he surveys, relying (as do all) on the data collected and published in Versmaseren (1961–90).

²³ I set aside two problems. First, that of 'choice', which has been central to much recent English-language literature on imperial religion, as though the only precondition for the spread of a cult were the appeal of its practices and doctrines. This seems to me conceptually at best a secondary concern. Then, of far greater theoretical interest, the willingness of gods to accept new worshippers: the ancient world knew cults whose members dispersed but whose god did not desire new worshippers.

²⁴ For two different approaches to this problem, see Ando (2002) and Ando (forthcoming b).

the corporeal, worshippers of Cybele at Rome and Pessinus might well have understood that Cybele somehow was and yet was not coextensive with their black stone; and in the same way she might also have been, but not been identical with, other black stones.²⁵

Secondly, the god or goddess must be willing to be known and worshipped by individuals, either without mediation or through the intervention of individuals chosen by the god or goddess him- or herself.²⁶ The institutional structures of such cults need not be heterologous with the social and political structures of the *poleis* in which they are practised, but their epistemological basis will be quite different from that underpinning *polis*-religions. At Rome the selection of priests by an electorate composed of citizens, the authority of those priests within their bailiwick, and the power of the senate in religious life presume the gods' willingness that humans and the institutions humans establish should determine for well or ill the shape and structure of their worship. Varro thus did not subordinate gods to men—he did not subscribe to the sort of ontological inversion that Augustine accused him of (August. *De Civ. D.* 6.4; Varro *Ant. Div. frag.* 2a).²⁷ Rather, as a participant in and theorist of one particular *polis*-religion, he understood its institutions to be the product of Romans, past, present and future, striving after *cognitio deorum*, 'knowledge of the gods' (*Ant. Div. frag.* 3).²⁸ The sources of knowledge and lines of

²⁵ Ando (forthcoming b).

²⁶ Consider Apul. *Met.* 11.1–5: Lucius prays in ignorance of the identity of the *regina caeli* ('the queen of heaven'), and it is Isis who chooses to reveal herself, to offer instruction, and to accept Lucius as an acolyte. In the words of the priest, Lucius should henceforth 'devote himself to the obedience of our *religio* and subordinate his will to the yoke of priestly office' (*teque iam nunc obsequio religionis nostrae dedica et ministerii iugum subi uoluntarium*, *Met.* 11.15). In contrast to most literature on this passage, which considers the perspective of the human and asks whether he 'converted' (e.g., Bradley, [1998] 315–34, citing much earlier work), I would emphasize the agency of Isis.

²⁷ Augustine's deliberate misreading of Varro's ontology is paralleled by his distortion through selective quotation of the epistemological concerns voiced by Varro at the outset of books 14 and 15 of the *Antiquitates Rerum Diuinarum* (frags 204, 228).

²⁸ Of course, Varro seeks such knowledge because one cannot obtain any particular benefit if one does not know which god can supply it. That should not obscure the importance of his emphasis on knowledge, a concern matched or surpassed by the terminological precision observed by Cicero in when establishing epistemological basis of each speaker in *De Natura Deorum*. What Balbus and Cotta in that dialogue appreciate is not simply that knowledge of the gods is acquired historically and incrementally, nor that increasing knowledge affects the performance of cult, but that the historical events become paradigmatic—are read as the actions of the divine in the world—only through the authoritative, interpretive powers of

authority between god, goddess, priest and initiate in any religion that had a mystery—and the diaspora cults of the Hellenistic and Roman worlds share this feature, at least—were fundamentally different.²⁹ If it is true that Christianity as an ‘organisation’ ultimately came ‘to overthrow and eliminate’ the ‘*polis* system’, that process must be explained not simply in social and political terms.³⁰ The one religion’s ‘organisation’ and the other’s ‘system’ expressed something fundamental about the way their gods existed in the world, and it is to the gods in Rome that we now turn.

Roman Theorists of Roman Religion

Before expressing surprise that the imperial city did not impose or export its religion on or to its provinces, we would do well to ask what its religion was. According to Cotta the pontiff, speaking in Cicero’s third book on the nature of the gods:³¹

Cumque omnis populi Romani religio in sacra et in auspicia diuisa sit, tertium adiunctum sit si quid praedictionis causa ex portentis et monstris Sibyllae interpretes haruspicesue monuerunt, harum ego religionum nullam umquam contemnendam putavi mihiue ita persuasi Romulum auspiciis, Numam sacris constitutis fundamenta iecisse nostra ciuitatis, quae numquam profecto sine summa placatione deorum immortalium tanta esse potuisset.

(Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 3.5)

The entirety of the *religio* of the Roman people is divided into rites and auspices, to which is added a third thing, namely, whatever warnings the interpreters of the Sibylline books or *haruspices* [Etruscan diviners] issue for the sake of foreknowledge on the basis of portents and omens. I hold that none of these *religiones* should ever be neglected,

the senate. Consider, too, Val. Max. 1.1.1b: the zeal of ‘our ancestors’ (*antiquis*) ‘not simply for preserving but also for expanding efficacious cult’ (*non solum seruandae sed etiam amplificandae religionis*) was so great that the then-flourishing city officially sent the scions of ten leading families to Etruria ‘in order to learn the science of their rites’ (*percipiendae sacrorum disciplinae gratia*).

²⁹ On the mysteries of mystery cults, see esp. Burkert (1987) 2–3, 66–88, arguing that their similarities derive not from their putative, ‘oriental’ origins, but from Greece. See also Smith (1990) 121–5, distinguishing between locative and utopian mystery-religions: Eleusis is an example of the former and Cybele, always ideologically foreign, an example of the latter.

³⁰ Burkert (1987) 51.

³¹ On this passage see Pease (1958) 984–6.

and I have persuaded myself that Romulus and Numa laid the foundations of our state by establishing the auspices and rites respectively and that our state could never have become so great without the goodwill of the immortal gods.

Dividing his *Divine Antiquities* into five triads, Varro devoted the first triad *ad homines* ('to men') and employed within it a threefold division similar to that advocated by Cotta: one book treated the *pontifices* (Roman college of priests), another the augurs, and the last the *quindecimviri sacrorum* (the fifteen-man college that supervised the performance of rites, Varro *Ant. Div. frag.* 4).³² In adopting this definition of *religio*, Cotta the pontiff—and Cicero the augur—decisively rejected the premise from which Velleius the Epicurean and Lucilius the Stoic began, namely, that religion originates with the impression left by the gods in the minds of all humans (Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.43, 2.5), and he did so for the same reason that Varro treated human matters before divine ones: *quod prius extiterint ciuitates, deinde ab eis haec instituta sint* ('communities arise first and then the things instituted by them', *Ant. Div. frag.* 5). And since Varro was not inquiring into 'the entirety of the nature of gods and humans' (*de omni natura deorum et hominum*), he investigated human and divine affairs *non quantum ad orbem terrarum, sed quantum ad solam Romam pertinet* ('not with reference to the entire world, but only as far as pertained to Rome alone', *Ant. Div. frag.* 5). Varro and Cicero thus divorced the *religio* of the city both in its praxis and its theology, from the naturalist theologies then in vogue in philosophical discourse.³³

The separation between *religio* as praxis, even praxis with attendant theological presuppositions, and theological speculation, what Cicero calls the *quaestio de natura deorum* ('the inquiry into the nature

³² The odd man out in this tradition is Valerius Maximus (1.1.1a).

³³ See, for example, Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.1: the *quaestio de natura deorum* ('the inquiry into the nature of the gods') is necessary *ad moderandam religionem* ('for the regulation of religion'), but it is not itself *religio*. The most famous and influential way of distinguishing types of religion and religious discourse was Scaevola's 'tripartite theology' (August. *Civ.* 4.27); note Varro's insistence that the third kind of theology, the 'civic', *accommodata est ad urbem* ('it is appropriate for civic life', *Ant. Div. frags* 7–10). On the tripartite theology see Pépin (1956) 265–94; Lieberg (1973) 63–115; Lieberg (1982) 25–53. On the development of a Roman theological discourse, see Beard (1986) 33–46; for attempts to situate Varro and Cicero in an era of rampant religious speculation, see Jocelyn (1982) 148–205 and Momigliano (1987) 58–73; for a fascinating attempt to situate that religious speculation in its political, imperialist context, see Cancik (1999) 161–73.

of the gods', *Nat. D.* 1.1), found expression elsewhere in the regulation of religion, not least in the boundary drawn between public, private and foreign cults.³⁴ To label something private or foreign did not necessarily stigmatise it: the *Bacchanalia* may have been *peregrina sacra* ('foreign rites'), but they were abolished only when their conduct 'passed into pernicious madness'³⁵ (*ad perniciosam uaesaniam iret*, Val. Max. 1.3.1). Likewise, the senate did not impugn *Fortuna* of Praeneste when it forbade Lutatius Cerco to consult her: it simply decided *auspiciis patriis, non alienigenis rem publicam administrari . . . oportere* ('that the *res publica* should be administered under national and not foreign auspices', Val. Max. 1.3.2). And the banishing of the Jews by Cornelius Hispanus found its most characteristically Roman expression in the removal of their *aras priuatas e publicis locis* ('of their private altars from public spaces', Val. Max. 1.3.3; see also Livy 25.1.12, but cf. Cic. *Leg.* 2.25). Dionysius of Halicarnassus thus observed a Roman habit of mind when he separated the *religio* of the state and the religions of Rome's immigrants and confessed τὴν Ῥωμαίων μᾶλλον ἀποδέχομαι θεολογίαν ('I prefer to accept the theology of the Romans', *Ant. Rom.* 2.20.2; cf. 2.19.3).

Dionysius praised the senate for policing the moral boundaries of the religion of the Roman people (2.19.5; cf. 2.19.2–3). But the spread of Roman religion will have depended on the maintaining of boundaries of a different kind, on the situation of the gods in the Roman landscape and on the consequent parsing of that landscape along several axes: temporal, political, juridical and ontological. This feature of Roman religion is at some level well-known and much

³⁴ See also Festus, *Gloss. Lat.* 424L s.v. *sacrum* (all references to Festus are from Lindsay [1913]): *Gallus Aelius ait sacrum esse, quocumque modo atque instituto ciuitatis consecratum sit, siue aedis, siue ara, siue signum, siue locus, siue pecunia, siue quid aliud, quod dis dedicatum atque consecratum sit; quod quidem priuatis suae religionis causa aliquid earum rerum deo dedicent, id pontifices Romanos non existimare sacrum. At si sua qua sacra priuata suscepta sunt, quae ex instituto pontificum statuto die aut certo loco facienda sint, ea sacra appellari, tamquam sacrificium; ille locus, ubi ea sacra priuata facienda sunt, uix uidetur sacer esse.* ('Aelius Gallus says that those things are sacred which are consecrated according to the custom and law of the city, whether a building or altar or statue or site or money or anything else which is dedicated and consecrated to the gods; whatever private individuals dedicate to a god out of religious scruple, that the Roman *pontifices* do not consider sacred. But any private rite that must be performed on a particular day or at a particular site in accordance with pontifical law is nevertheless called sacred, like an offering; the site, where those private rites must be performed, scarcely seems to be sacred.') Cf. Gai. *Inst.* 2.5; Ulp. *Dig.* 1.8.9, both quoted below.

³⁵ Translated by Shackleton Bailey (2000) 45.

researched.³⁶ But the principles underlying this system of mapping the world placed enormous obstacles before any attempt to export the *sacra populi Romani* ('the rites of the Roman people'). Put in different terms, Roman religion and theology lagged far behind the political and cultural developments engendered by the imperialist project. Between the polarities of importing gods through *evocatio* (the ritual calling-forth to the Romans' side of a hostile city's tutelary deities) and sanctioning the continuation of a city's particular cults lay an enormous range of possibilities for which the *ius pontificale* ('pontifical law') could not account and of which it could not conceive.

The Penates at Lavinium

According to an oft-related myth, Aeneas settled in Lavinium the gods that he had brought from Troy. When Ascanius subsequently founded Alba, he moved his ancestral gods to the new city of his people. The very next day, the gods were discovered back in their former *sacrarium* (a repository for sacred objects). 'Since it was considered possible that this had been the work of human hands' (*quia id humana manu factum existimari poterat*, Val. Max. 1.8.7), the gods were moved again. 'They made their will apparent by removing themselves a second time' (*uoluntatem suam altero transitu significasse*, 1.8.7).³⁷ This tradition existed alongside the presence on the Velia in Rome of a residence for the *Penates*, attested already in Varro's list of the *Sacraria Argeiorum* and known to Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Livy (Varro *Ling.* 5.54; Dion. Hal. 1.68.1–2; Livy 3.7.11, 5.30.6, 45.6.5; but cf. Varro *Ling.* 5.144; Varro *Ant. Div.* 15ab; Livy 5.52.8; Macro-

³⁶ Catalano (1978) 440–553; Linderski (1986) 2146–2312; Scheid (1995) 424–32; Scheid (1996) 241–58; Scheid (1999a) 184–203.

³⁷ See above, n. 5. Cf. *CIL* 10.797: Sp. Turranius Proculus Gellianus was *praefectus pro praetore iure dicundo in urbe Lavinio, pater patratus populi Laurentis foederis ex libris Sibyllinis percutiendi cum populo Romano, sacrorum principiorum populi Romani Quiritium nominis Latini, quai apud Laurentis coluntur* ('praetorian prefect for the administration of justice in the city of Lavinium, *pater patratus* [the fetial priest who ratified a treaty with religious rites] of the Laurentine people, empowered in accordance with the Sibylline books to strike a treaty with the Roman people, and priest of the rites of the origins of the Roman people, the Quirites of the Latin name, which are celebrated among the Laurentines'). On the treaty and *pater patratus* see Livy 1.24 and Serv. *ad Aen.* 9.52, together with Ogilvie (1965) 110–11, 127–9 and Thomas (1990) 143–70.

Sat. 3.4.11).³⁸ The myth does not recognise that temple. Within its narrative, the Romans accede to the *uoluntas*, the 'will' of the gods, and so continue throughout their history to travel to Lavinium to worship their ancestral gods in the city where they had chosen to reside (see, e.g., Asc. *Sc.* 19;³⁹ Livy 5.52.8; *ILS* 5004; *CIL* 10.797; Serv. *ad Aen.* 2.296, 3.12; Macrobi. 3.4.11).⁴⁰

Lavinium was one among several sites at which 'the thirty peoples of the Latin name' came together for common rites (Livy 2.18.3; Dion. Hal. 5.12.3; cf. Festus 253L *s.v.* *prisci Latini*; Plin. *HN* 3.69, listing the *populi Albenses*, 'Alban peoples'), and scholars have long explained the existence of these multiple sites by suggesting that as hegemony over the cities of Latium passed from one city to another, so did the locus of its common festivals.⁴¹ Yet the underlying assumption that the sacred and political topographies of Latium should be homologous fails, not least because it cannot explain why cults and rites were not moved as social, political and economic energy shifted from city to city. The Roman explanation for the location of the *Penates*, on the other hand, centred on the *uoluntas* of the gods themselves, and on the expression of that will through their presence-in-the-world. Of course, the myth may have evolved to explain a seeming anachronism; if so, we should confess that the myth was current and effective in the early empire and beyond. Indeed, the anachronism must appear all the more violent if we accept the force of Yan Thomas' demonstration that the centrality of Lavinium in Roman myth and cult was a late development and that 'Lavinium' existed under the empire as an elaborate fiction: it was no more and no less than a *religiosa ciuitas* ('a sacred city') with magistrates and priests but no citizens, a constructed and complex ancestor and double for Rome itself.⁴²

³⁸ On the coexistence of *Penates* at Lavinium and Rome, see Thomas (1990) 143–70; on their association with Vesta, see Thomas (1990) 147–8, 150.

³⁹ Clark (1907) 21.

⁴⁰ On the sacrifice of magistrates at Lavinium, see also Scheid (1981) 168–71, esp. 171 and Dubourdieu (1989) 339–61.

⁴¹ Momigliano (1989) 65, 85; Cornell (1989) 264–9, discussing earlier work; Cornell (1995) 71–2. Oakley (1998) 538–71 surveys settlement of Latin relations with Rome after the Latin war. On Lavinium in particular and the history of its interactions with Rome in the late republic and empire, see esp. Wissowa (1915) 21–33; Oakley (1998) 506–8, 513, 560–561; Cooley (2000b) 173–91.

⁴² Thomas (1990) 143–70; *religiosa ciuitas*: Symmachus *Ep.* 1.71.

The *Penates*' immanence in Lavinium was not transitory; rather, it was expressed through an identity with their images so complete that the narratives of this episode paradoxically employ the gods in metonymy for their idols. But to analyse the language in these terms is to evade a profound ontological and metaphysical problem by labelling it one of representation.⁴³ As Greeks and Romans knew of races that worshipped aniconic objects, so they knew of races whose gods did not live in their cities. Citing Xerxes' famous complaint that the Greeks trapped their gods within walls, Cicero affirmed Greek and Roman practice: wishing to increase piety towards the gods, the Greeks and Romans *easdem illos urbis quas nos incolere uoluerunt* ('desired that the gods should inhabit the same cities that they did', Cic. *Leg.* 2.26). To that end, the Romans consecrated *aedes sacrae* ('sacred buildings') for the gods, whose actual *sedes* ('residences') were the inner rooms (Varro *Ant. Div.* frag. 70: *delubrum esse . . . aut in quo loco dei dicatum sit simulacrum, ut, <sicut> in quo figunt candelam, candelabrum appellat, sic in quo deum ponunt, delubrum dicant*, 'a *delubrum* ["shrine"] . . . is a place in which an image of a god has been dedicated: so, just as the object to which people attach *candela* ["candles"], is called a *candelabrum*, they call a *delubrum* that place in which they put a *deum* ["a god"]'; cf. Varro *Ling.* 5.160; Festus, *Gloss. Lat.* 12L s.v. *aedis*).⁴⁴

The Romans acknowledged and negotiated the place of the gods in the landscape through religious laws, which oversaw the use and management of space, the organisation of time, and the performance of ritual. The intimate connection between these categories emerges with particular clarity in the speech of Camillus that closes Livy's fifth book.⁴⁵

Urbem auspicato inauguratoque conditam habemus; nullus locus in ea non religionum deorumque est plenus; sacrificiis sollemnibus non dies magis statim quam loca sunt in quibus fiant.

(Livy 5.52.2)

We inhabit a city founded after auspices were taken and rites of inauguration were performed; no place in it is not full of religious associations and of gods; as many days are fixed for solemn rites as there are places in which they are performed.

⁴³ Gordon (1979) 7–8; Ando (forthcoming b).

⁴⁴ Cf. Dubourdieu and Scheid (2000) 59–80.

⁴⁵ On the founding of cities, see Serv. *ad Aen.* 1.466, 4.212.

Camillus' argument against the Romans' decamping to Veii suggests that Rome is not 'full of gods' merely because the Romans invited them to dwell there. On the contrary, the gods act both in the world and in time and Roman myth merely concretises in narrative a concern for topography, for the timely and timeless presence of the divine in the material world, that finds expression elsewhere in Roman thought in the use of *sacra* (things consecrated to a god, and so belonging to or performed for that god) as a substantive to designate both objects and actions.⁴⁶

This apparent blurring within religious thought of ontological distinctions that contemporaneous philosophers would have dogmatically maintained is paralleled in Roman law on the sacralisation of space. According to Livy, the *pontifices* fleeing the Gauls buried some sacred objects on the Capitol (5.40.7–8; see Plut. *Cam.* 20.3–6); this legend is likely to be connected to the presence on the Capitol of chambers and underground cisterns in which ancient consecrated objects were stored when they were no longer to be displayed or, in the case of decorative statuary, when they had fallen from the temple that they once adorned (Varro *Ant. Div.* 7b = Gell. 2.10).⁴⁷ The sacrality of these objects required that their disposal be conducted with due reverence and their presence even when buried sacralised the land. Yet these objects had been consecrated through human ritual action; they were not gifts of a god, like Vesta's fire or the Salian shields. About the latter category of objects, Camillus argued that a god's act of giving in itself sacralised the site in which it took place (Livy 5.54.7: *hic Vestae ignes, hic ancilia caelo demissa, hic omnes propitii manentibus uobis di*, 'here is Vesta's fire, here the sacred shields fell from the sky, here all the gods are favourably disposed to you so long as you remain'). On this theory, myth narrates the history of the presence of the gods in the world and that presence, however transitory in its impression on the sense-perception of con-

⁴⁶ Roman myths as myths of place: MacCormack (1990) 9–13; Woolf (1997) 78. *Sacra*: see Livy 5.51.9, where they are buried in the earth, and 5.52.4, where Camillus urges that *gentilicia* and *publica sacra* (the rites particular to individual families and those common to the state, respectively) not interrupted by war not be interrupted in peace.

⁴⁷ Cf. Thomas (1990) 150; on the continued reverence accorded sacred objects, see Bouma (1993) 291–7, treating Etruscan terracottas, and Glinister (2000) 54–70.

temporaries, revealed the gods' abiding interest in or attachment to particular landscapes.⁴⁸

The continued power of Varro's *signa uetera* ('ancient tokens') implies a still more profound and nuanced appreciation for the relationship between gods and objects. It reflects among other things Roman belief that humans should take cognizance of gods' attachments and that man's primary vehicle for doing so was ritual action properly performed (cf. Varro *Ling.* 7.88). In this context, what is worth emphasising is not the scruple with which Romans performed their rites and observed procedure (for Roman reflections on this topic see, e.g., Livy 5.52.5–12; Plin. *HN* 28.10). Rather, we should heed Pliny's confession that the efficacy of prayers, correctly recited in a ritual context, is much more than evidence merely that 'the power of omens is under our control'. On the contrary: there exists 'no greater evidence of divine indulgence' than that the gods allow our words and actions such authority (Plin. *HN* 28.17). Roman law on the consecration of space and on the limits of priestly power in that arena reflects a similar respect for the ontological and metaphysical hierarchies inherent in the world:

Sacra loca ea sunt, quae publice sunt dedicata, siue in ciuitate sint siue in agro. Sciendum est locum publicum tunc sacrum fieri posse, cum princeps eum dedicauit vel dedicandi dedit potestatem. Illud notandum est aliud esse sacrum locum, aliud sacrarium. sacer locus est locus consecratus, sacrarium est locus, in quo sacra reponuntur, quod etiam in aedificio priuato esse potest, et solent, qui liberare eum locum religione uolunt, sacra inde euocare.

(Ulpian, *Digesta* 1.8.9 *praef.*–2)

Sacred places are those that have been publicly dedicated, whether in the city or in the country. It must be understood that a public place can only become sacred if the emperor has dedicated it or has granted the power of dedicating it. It should also be observed that a sacred place is one thing, a *sacrarium* another. A sacred place is a place that has been consecrated, but a *sacrarium* is a place in which *sacra* have been deposited. This could even be in a private building, and it is customary for those who wish to free such a place from its religious scruple to call forth the *sacra*.

⁴⁸ Cf. Lane Fox (1986) 102–67, a wide-ranging treatment of epiphany, esp. 127–41 on place.

The terminological precision inherited and maintained by Ulpian and devised to honor the polarity of public and private so central to Roman religion was understood to reflect and perhaps to be a human institution, one that must yield before the possible presence of a god in unconsecrated sacred objects.⁴⁹ It must have been, furthermore, the potential identity of object and god, however conceptualised, that justified the implied attempt to address a religious formula to an inanimate object.

The use of *euocatio* to desacralise a *sacrarium* in itself breaks down the boundary between public and private, not least because the power of sacralising or desacralising belonged to the domain of the *pontifices*. *Euocatio* is surely most famous for its use in 'calling forth' the gods of besieged cities and inviting them to dwell in Rome.⁵⁰ The success of that ritual depended on two crucial things: the god or goddess had to be willing to move and the Romans seemingly had to transport the cult statue of the god in question from its native city to its new home in Rome. To transfer the statue was to transfer the god: Livy, for example, believed not simply that Camillus promised a new temple to Juno and that the Veientes failed to understand that Rome had promised new *sedes* ('homes') to their other gods (5.21); his narrative of Juno's actual removal elides entirely the fact that the soldiers were (presumably) carrying not the goddess but her statue (Livy 5.22.5–7; a similar pattern is visible at Dion. Hal. 13.3). And the emphasis laid on Juno's assenting to the move, with both gesture and voice, is correlative to the *uoluntas* of the *Penates*: if *euocatio* looks for all the world like an antiquarian, theological justification for imperialism, the decision of the *Penates* to remain in Lavinium suggests the limitations on human agency and human will inherent in the epistemological framework and metaphysics of power in Roman religion.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Cf. Gai. *Inst.* 2.5–7 (quoted below), allowing that provincial soil not properly *religiosus* ('hallowed') or *sacer* ('sacred') is nevertheless *pro religioso* or *pro sacro habetur* ('treated as though hallowed [or] sacred'); cf. Livy 1.55.4, quoted below.

⁵⁰ On *euocatio*, see Wissowa (1912) 43–50; Blomart (1997) 99–111.

⁵¹ Compare the tradition that develops around Tarquin's effort to *exaugurare* ('to desacralise', 'to deconsecrate') the Capitol: Festus, *Gloss. Lat.* 160L *s.v. nequitum* (Cato *Originum lib. 1* 'Fana in eo loco compluria fuere: ea exauguravit, praeterquam quod Termino fanum fuit; id nequitum exaugurari', 'Cato in the first book of his *Origines*: "there were

Rome, Italy and Empire

Euocatio helped to explain the centrality of Rome in the sacred topography of its empire and it did so by placing the gods in Rome, in accordance with their express desire.⁵² But the need to situate the gods within the landscapes of Rome, Latium and Italy, which *euocatio* satisfied, scarcely permitted the exportation of gods to Italy and the provinces, nor, indeed, is it obvious how or why a Roman committed to a theology of presence would have explained or justified interfering in the conduct of cults outside the locus of Rome itself. As we have seen, the colonial and municipal charters of the Julio-Claudian and Flavian periods negotiate this problem with a brevity that bespeaks a common understanding. Whence might it have arisen and how would it have been expressed?

The city of Rome had its own Latin temple and cult, corresponding to those of the *Penates* at Lavinium and of Jupiter Latiaris at Alba. According to Roman legend, Servius Tullius established the Temple of Diana on the Aventine *commune Latinorum* ('for the Latin people to have in common', Varro *Ling.* 5.43; see also Cato *Orig.* frag. 58,⁵³ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.26.4–5, 4.49; Livy 1.45.2). Servius reportedly himself wrote the law of the temple, which listed the cities it encompassed, their mutual rights, and the regulations of the cult. Dionysius of Halicarnassus saw an ancient copy of this law and it subsequently served as a paradigm for the regulation of Romanising cults in provincial colonies (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.26.5; cf. Festus 164L *s.v. nesi*).⁵⁴ At Narbo in 12 CE, for example, the people of the Gallia Narbonensis dedicated an altar to Augustus. Having listed a few specific

many shrines in that area; he desacralised them, except the shrine of Terminus; that could not be desacralised'''); Livy 1.55.4 (the refusal of Terminus to move even when summoned forth, *euocari*, was taken as an omen); Dion. Hal. 3.69.3–6 (the augurs were supposed to find out ['whether the gods would move' (ἐὰν παραχωρῶσιν οἱ θεοί)]; see also Ov. *Fast.* 2.667–70; Serv. *ad Aen.* 9.446: when it was discovered that the Tarpeian hill was littered with the houses of the gods, it was decided to 'summon forth' (*euocare*) the gods to new temples; Terminus alone 'did not want to move' (*discedere noluit*) and so remained. On a similar problem in Roman religious epistemology, namely the formula *siue deus siue dea, in cuius tutela hic locus locusue est* ('whether god or goddess, under whose protection lies this place or grove'), see Scheid (1999a) 198–200.

⁵² Ando (2002); cf. Ando (2001) 123–42.

⁵³ Peter (1914) 72.

⁵⁴ Wissowa (1912) 39.

regulations, they allowed that *ceterae leges huic arae eadem sunt, quae sunt arae Dianae in Aventino* ('the other laws for this altar shall be the same as those for the altar of Diana on the Aventine', *ILS* 112 B 20–2; identical wording is used on *ILS* 4907 and *CIL* 11.361).⁵⁵ The paradigmatic value of this law no doubt derived from its status as an ancient text governing a shared cult. About the original foundation we could ask, Why Diana?⁵⁶ We should also ask: Why the Aventine? The answer undoubtedly is that the Aventine lay outside the *pomerium*, the boundary established by the augurs that marked the limit of the urban auspices (Gell. 13.14.1–4; Varro *Ling.* 5.143). The importance of the *pomerium* as a ritually established boundary would be impossible to overstate: implicated in it were a host of binarisms central to the conduct of Roman public life—urban and rural, civil and military, Roman and foreign—whose divisions were precisely drawn and rigidly observed, for all the difficulty of their reconstruction.⁵⁷ The Temple to Diana, founded as a site of inter-city cult, had been deliberately situated outside the city of Rome as it was ritually and religiously defined and it was its placement in that space that endowed its *lex* ('law', or set of regulations) with continuing relevance.

The expansion of Rome and extension of the franchise taxed this metaphysical geography in a variety of ways and the Romans devised a number of ways to accommodate these pressures. As Livy understood, even if through antiquarian reconstruction, the ritual of the *fetiales* (the priests charged with superintending treaties and declarations of war) originated in a period when Rome fought wars of purely local significance (1.32.6–14; cf. Serv. *ad Aen.* 9.52).⁵⁸ Polybius implies that the *fetiales* played little role in declaring war in the mid-second century (13.3.7); their importance had been revived by the time Octavian declared war on Cleopatra, if not before (Cass. Dio 50.4.4–5). According to a tradition first attested only obliquely under Augustus, the war against Pyrrhus forced the Romans to adapt the ritual to the realities of transmarine warfare. 'The Romans could

⁵⁵ On the *leges* ('laws') of altars, see Wissowa (1912) 473–5.

⁵⁶ Romans cited the paradigm of the Temple of Diana at Ephesus: Livy 1.45.2 and *De Viris Illustribus* 7.9.

⁵⁷ Catalano (1978) 479–82 and Beard *et al.* (1998) 177–81 offer brief surveys of the issues involved; on the role of the augurs in maintaining the *pomerium* (the ritually established boundary of the city of Rome), see esp. Linderski (1986) 2156–7.

⁵⁸ On the evolution and import of the ritual, see Wissowa (1912) 550–554; Ogilvie (1965) 127–36; Rüpke (1990) 97–117.

not find a place where they could perform through the *fetiales* this ritual of declaring war' (*nec inuenirent locum, ubi hanc sollemnitatem per fetiales indicendi belli celebrarent*), so they forced a captured soldier to buy a plot in the Circus Flaminius adjacent to the Temple of Bellona, outside the *pomerium*, and satisfied the law of declaring war *quasi in hostili loco* ('as if in hostile territory', Serv. *ad Aen.* 9.52; cf. Ov. *Fast.* 6.203–8; Suet. *Claud.* 25.5; Festus 30L *s.v.* *Vellona*).⁵⁹ This ritual had an essential correlative in the Romans' symbolic seizure of some piece of an enemy's land on which to place their camp and take the auspices (Varro *Calenus* [*Logistorici* frag. 2⁶⁰ = Serv. *ad Aen.* 9.52]: *Varro in Caleno ita ait duces cum primum hostilem agrum introituri erant, ominis causa prius hastam in eum agrum mittebant, ut castris locum caperent*, 'Varro in his *Calenus* says that generals, when about to enter an enemy's territory, out of religious scruple would first throw a spear into that territory in order to seize a place for a camp'). The distinction between Roman and hostile territory formed part of a sacred topography determined by augural law and developed, like the ritual of the *fetiales*, in an early stage of Rome's expansion. 'According to our *augures publici*', wrote Varro, 'there are five kinds of land: Roman, Sabine, peregrine, hostile and indeterminate' (*Ut nostri augures publici disserunt, agrorum sunt genera quinque: Romanus, Gabinus, peregrinus, hosticus, incertus*, Varro *Ling.* 5.33).⁶¹ In ossifying a taxonomy relevant to the earliest stages of Roman history, these categories obviously reveal an inherent conservatism; they also concretise, once again, an essential recognition of man's epistemological limitations. This mapping within augural law was paralleled in pontifical law by a distinction between Roman and provincial *solum* ('soil'). When Pliny wrote to Trajan asking whether he could safely move a Temple of the Great Mother in Nicomedia, he attributed his hesitation to the lack of a *lex* for the temple, 'as the method of consecration' (*morem dedicationis*) practised in Nicomedia was *aliud apud nos* ('different from that practised among us'). Trajan responded that Pliny could be *sine sollicitudine religionis* ('without fear of violating religious scruple'), as the *solum peregrinae ciuitatis capax non sit dedicationis, quae fit nostro iure* ('the

⁵⁹ The senate met with returning, victorious generals and foreign embassies in the Temple of Bellona, precisely because it lay outside the *pomerium*: see, e.g., Livy 26.21.1, 28.9.5, 30.21.12.

⁶⁰ Semi (1965).

⁶¹ On these categories see Catalano (1978) 491–8.

soil of a peregrine city cannot receive consecration as it is performed according to our law', *Ep.* 10.50.1).⁶²

Roman law was not static, nor did Rome's priestly colleges speak with a single voice. The interdependence of the sacred and political emerges with particular clarity in the definition of *municipalia sacra* preserved by Festus: 'Those *sacra* are called *municipalia*, which a people had from its origin before receiving Roman citizenship and which the *pontifices* wanted them to continue to observe and perform in the way in which they had been accustomed to perform them from antiquity' (*Municipalia sacra uocantur, quae ab initio habuerunt ante ciuitatem Romanam acceptam; quae obseruare eos uoluerunt pontifices, et eo more facere, quo adsuessent antiquitus*, Festus, *Gloss. Lat.* 146L s.v. *municipalia sacra*).⁶³ The extension of the franchise necessarily extended and fundamentally altered the *pontifices'* domain. So, under Tiberius, the *equites Romani* (the Roman knights, a class of the census) wished to dedicate a statue to Fortuna Equestris ('equestrian Fortune') but were unable to find a temple to that goddess in Rome; they did find one in Antium. *Reperitum est* ('it was discovered') that all the rites, temples and idols of the gods in the towns of Italy were *iuris atque imperii Romani* ('under the law and power of Rome', Tac. *Ann.* 3.71.1). This assertion harmonises so naturally with developments in politics, law and culture that its rupture with the sacred topographies and theological bases of Roman republican religion easily go unnoticed. It seems thus both intelligible and striking that it was the antiquarian emperor Claudius who enclosed the Aventine within the *pomerium* (Gell. *NA* 13.14.7).

⁶² Cf. Gai. *Inst.* 2.5–7a: *Sed sacrum quidem hoc solum existimatur, quod ex auctoritate populi Romani consecratum est, ueluti lege de ea re lata aut senatusconsulto facto. Religiosum uero nostra uoluntate facimus mortuum inferentes in locum nostrum. . . . Sed in prouinciali solo placet plerisque solum religiosum non fieri, quia in eo solo dominium populi Romani est uel Caesaris, nos autem possessionem tantum uel usumfructum habere uidemur. utique tamen, etiamsi non sit religiosum, pro religioso habetur. Item quod in prouinciis non ex auctoritate populi Romani consecratum est, proprie sacrum non est, tamen pro sacro habetur.* ('That alone is thought to be sacred, which is consecrated on the authority of the Roman people, either by law or by decree of the senate. We make things *religiosum* ["hallowed"] in private actions by bearing our dead to particular sites. . . . But on provincial soil it is generally agreed that the soil cannot be *religiosum*, since there ownership rests with the Roman people or with Caesar, while we seem to have only possession or use. Nevertheless, even if it is not *religiosum*, it is treated as though it were *religiosum*. Similarly, whatever in the provinces is not consecrated on authority of the Roman people is properly not sacred, but it is nevertheless treated as though it were sacred.')

⁶³ Cf. Livy 26.34.12, from the plebiscite passed before the capture of Capua: the *pontifices* were ordered to adjudicate which of the idols and statues captured from the enemy were sacred and which profane.

The Most Manifest God

The emergent realities of political culture in the early empire did more than bring the *Penates* to Irni. The continued creation of colonies of Latin status, like the imposition of the *Lex Flavia Municipalis* on pre-existing towns, testifies to a gradual development whose nodal points can be plotted in the ideology of colonisation itself. Domitian did not found Irni *contra suspicionem periculi* . . . *ut propugnaculum imperii* ('against the suspicion of danger, as a bulwark of empire', Cic. *Agr.* 2.73). The juridical status of its citizens, on the other hand, suggests that Domitian did not envision Irni as an *effigies parva simulacrumque quoddam* ('as a small representation and kind of reflection' of Rome itself, Gell. 16.13.9). But the anachronistic use of juridical categories devised in a very different geographic reality, however idiosyncratically Roman, raised religious and legal issues whose contours have hopefully now been clarified.

After the death of Augustus, the colony of Tarraco built a temple for him and so provided an example for all the provinces (Tac. *Ann.* 1.78.1). Other cities presumably learned of Tarraco's action in the same way that they learned of Mytilene's festival for Augustus: Tarraco told them about it.⁶⁴ What made it possible for these cities to share the emperor and for the cult of the emperor to endure longer and spread further than those of the *Penates* or the Capitoline triad?⁶⁵

Let us return to the *Penates* in Lavinium. A long and complicated tradition identified them with the Great Gods (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.67.3–4, citing Timaeus *FGrH* 566 F59; Cassius Hemina frag. 6⁶⁶; Varro *Ling.* 5.58, *Curio de Cultu Deorum* frag. 1, *Ant. Hum.* frag. 8,⁶⁷ *Ant. Div.* frag. 15ab; Macrobi. 3.4.6–10). Why were they called 'Great?' 'Because, having been moved from Lavinium to Rome, they twice returned to their place; because generals about to go to the provinces sacrificed first before them⁶⁸; because no one knows their names; because they are felt to be *praesentissimi* ["most present"]' (*quod de Lavinio translati Romam bis in locum suum redierint: quod imperatores in prouincias*

⁶⁴ On Mytilene's publication of the decree establishing the festival see Ando (2000) 173–4; on similar advertising campaigns in the Hellenistic world, see Edmondson (1999) 78, 85–6.

⁶⁵ On Capitolia outside of Rome, see Barton (1982) 259–342; Ando (2000) 208.

⁶⁶ Peter (1914) 99–100.

⁶⁷ Mirsch (1882) 88.

⁶⁸ Cf. Wissowa (1912) 164 n. 6.

ituri apud eos primum immolarint: quod eorum nomina nemo sciat: quod praesentissimi sentiantur, Serv. *Ad Aen.* 3.12). This last quality, that of immanence, of being present, is one the *Penates* seem to share with Isis: her first words to Lucius were *En adsum* ('Behold! I am present', Apul. *Met.* 11.5). But the *Penates* were present only in Lavinium, while Isis revealed herself to Lucius where he was. The failure of any Roman cult to become a religion for and of the empire should therefore not surprise us. The gods of the capital made their homes there and they became attached to its soil.⁶⁹ In the end, Rome gave to the empire as a whole two very different gods, who shared one essential quality. So long as his power endured, the emperor's immanence in his ubiquitous portraits made him ἐπιφανέστατος ('the most manifest') of the numinous powers of this world.⁷⁰ His chief rival, who became his chief patron, was likewise present everywhere in potentiality and promise: *Ubi enim sunt duo uel tres congregati in nomine meo, ibi sum in medio eorum* ('Wherever two or three of you are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst', Matthew 18:20).⁷¹

⁶⁹ Wissowa (1912) 86–7 (cf. 408).

⁷⁰ Mitthof (1993); Ando (2000) 232–53, 268–9, 295–6, 394–5, 407.

⁷¹ I conducted the research for this chapter with the support of a fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies and completed it while visiting Wolfson College, Oxford. I am grateful to those two institutions for their support. For comments and questions my thanks to Sabine MacCormack.

13. EXPELLING THE MIND: POLITICS AND PHILOSOPHY IN FLAVIAN ROME

John L. Penwill

pius, fortis, fidelis, ex paruo creuit, sestertium reliquit trecenties, nec
umquam philosophum audiuit.

(Petronius, *Satyricon* 71)

Conscious of duty, courageous, trustworthy, he started with little, left
thirty million, and never let a philosopher tell him what to do.

Alexandria Quartet

When Vespasian was at Alexandria, preparing to set out for Rome and the imperial destiny towards which the gods of Judaea and Egypt were summoning him,¹ he is said to have conversed in his palace with three philosophers: Apollonius of Tyana, Dio Chrysostom and Euphrates.² Vespasian muses on how the shortcomings of his predecessors have brought the principate into disrepute and asks for advice on how to wield power effectively and fairly. Both Euphrates and Dio suggest a restoration of power to the people—Euphrates through the establishment of a democratic form of government, Dio through a referendum by which the people could choose what form of government they desired.³ Apollonius rejects these suggestions as impractical; it is the kind of advice one might expect a philosopher to accept, but not an ambitious politician who has already put plans in operation to acquire the most powerful office in the world. Instead he gives practical advice on how Vespasian should conduct himself and his government once he has gained his objective, advice that,

¹ For the god of the Jews see the prophecy delivered from Mount Carmel (Tac. *Hist.* 2.78; Suet. *Vesp.* 5; cf. also Joseph. *Bj* 3.8.9, 4.11.7, 6.6.4); for the gods of Egypt, Tac. *Hist.* 4.81–3; Suet. *Vesp.* 7.

² The story is narrated in Philostr. *VA* 5.27–37.

³ This is not therefore a rerun of the ‘ideal constitution’ discussions that we get at Hdt. 3.80–2, Cic. *Rep.* 1.65–9 and elsewhere; *contra* Moles (1978) 83.

composed with the advantage of authorial hindsight, the historical record shows largely to have been followed. Euphrates and Dio are discredited; but that is not the end of the story. Apollonius will not take up Vespasian's offer to become his philosophic adviser through anger at his decision to rescind Nero's declaration of independence for Greece.⁴

So Philostratus begins his writing of Flavian Rome.⁵ Ever since Plato developed the idea of the philosopher-ruler and set up the Academy as a school for statesmen, the relationship between philosophy and government had been problematic; a signal example is Plato's own thorny relationship with the *tyrannos* of Syracuse. The conversation at Alexandria sets up the possibility that this new reign will be one of those rare moments where there is fruitful dialogue between philosopher and *princeps*. But such is not to be. As the positions advanced by Euphrates and Dio Chrysostom in Philostratus' narrative show, philosophy has dangerously democratic tendencies.⁶ Such pockets of resistance cannot be accommodated in the principate; Greece cannot be allowed to remain free, and philosophy must be firmly put in its place. The tone of the dynasty is set; one of Vespasian's first acts on returning to Rome is to expel the philosophers:

καὶ πάντας αὐτίκα τοὺς φιλοσόφους ὁ Οὐεσπασιανός, πλὴν τοῦ Μουσωνίου, ἐκ τῆς Ῥώμης ἐξέβαλε, τὸν δὲ δὴ Δημήτριον καὶ τὸν Ὀστιλιανὸν καὶ ἐς νήσους κατέκλεισε.

(Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 65.11.2)

And Vespasian at once expelled all the philosophers from Rome, with the exception of Musonius, and he even confined Demetrius and Hostilianus to islands.

⁴ Philostr. *VA* 5.41; cf. Suet. *Nero* 24.2, *Vesp.* 8.4, Paus. 7.17.2, Jer. *Chron. Eus.* for 74 CE.

⁵ The episode is normally regarded as fictitious: cf. Moles (1978) 83; Bowie (1978) 1660–2; Anderson (1986) 179; Rawson (1989) 248. On the other hand, as Bowersock (1970) 19, points out, such a meeting is *chronologically* possible. I use it here, as Philostratus did, to adumbrate important themes in the relation between philosopher and ruler in the Flavian era; in that respect its historicity is irrelevant.

⁶ Cf. Cass. Dio 64.12.2, where 'praising democracy' is listed as one of the elder Helvidius' faults.

Scenes in the Senate

In the construction of modern historians, the expulsion of the philosophers by both Vespasian and Domitian is linked to the activities of the so-called 'Stoic opposition'. The philosophical basis of the elder Helvidius Priscus' antipathy to Vespasian and of the younger Helvidius' to Domitian is fully argued in works like Ramsay MacMullen's *Enemies of the Roman Order*;⁷ the emperors simply did not live up to the Stoic ideal of the just ruler. But to clothe this opposition in the rosy light of philosophical altruism is perhaps to take things a little too far. The significant moment in the elder Helvidius' relationship with Vespasian comes early in the reign, in the aftermath of the attempts to settle scores with those who had undertaken unjust prosecutions during Nero's reign. Soon after Galba came to power, Helvidius had impeached Eprius Marcellus, the prosecutor of his father-in-law, Thrasea Paetus (Tac. *Hist.* 4.6). Forced to drop the indictment due to Galba's lack of support, Helvidius renewed his attack when the senate met after the defeat and death of Vitellius (4.7–8, 43). At the same time Musonius successfully prosecuted P. Egnatius Celer for treacherously (as a professed fellow-Stoic) giving perjured evidence against Barea Soranus (4.10, 40), Curtius Montanus instituted proceedings against the *delator* Aquilius Regulus (4.42), and Iunius Mauricus demanded the release of Nero's imperial diaries so that evidence could be gathered for further prosecutions (4.40).⁸

The severe destabilisation of the principate over the previous year and the absence of the most recent claimant to that office may well explain this momentary spark of independence on the part of the senate. It was however shortlived. The next day Domitian, backed by Vespasian's strong-man Mucianus, put an end to these impeachments by arguing for amnesty. The senate capitulated at once (*Hist.* 4.44).

⁷ See MacMullen (1966) 1–94; cf. Harris (1977) 105–14.

⁸ For Musonius see further below. Curtius Montanus, along with Helvidius and Paconius Agrippinus, were implicated with Thrasea in Eprius Marcellus' speech before the senate (Tac. *Ann.* 16.28). Montanus is cited as a writer of *detestanda carmina* ('repulsive poems'), marking him as a satirist rather than a philosopher; but presumably is to be regarded as part of the Thrasea/Helvidius group. Agrippinus earns some laudatory remarks from Epictetus for his indifference to the buffetings of fortune (Arr. *Epict. Diss.* 1.1.28–32, 1.2.12–18, frag. 21). Iunius Mauricus enters the historical stage at this point and will become sufficiently attached to the Helvidius father and son circle to be exiled by Domitian (Plin. *Ep.* 3.11.3).

Helvidius maintained his integrity (or his rage)⁹ by more and more stridently criticising Vespasian until, finally, reluctantly, uncertainly, the emperor had him put to death, at a date assumed to be around 74 CE.¹⁰

Helvidius/Stoic martyr. As Thrasea was to Nero, so Helvidius is to Vespasian: another morally uplifting example of a philosopher courageously confronting a tyrant. So Epictetus will represent it—but Tacitus' narrative does not encourage such facile construction. The true philosopher in politics is not Helvidius but Musonius, and his credentials are impeccable: *studium philosophiae et placita Stoicorum aemulatus* ('he zealously pursued the study of philosophy and the tenets of the Stoics', *Hist.* 3.81); of Helvidius, even in the laudatory summary of his character, Tacitus merely says *doctores sapientiae secutus est, qui sola bona quae honesta, mala tantum quae turpia . . . adnumerant* ('he followed those professors of wisdom who count what is honourable as the only good and what is disgraceful as the only evil', 4.5). Musonius in other words is genuinely engaged with the belief-system of an established school; Helvidius is influenced by people—the *doctores sapientiae* ('professors of wisdom') and (once the family connection is established) his father-in-law Thrasea. Furthermore, the *philosophical* confrontation is not between Helvidius and Vespasian, nor even Musonius and Celer. True, Celer has betrayed his philosophical principles (*Celer professus sapientiam, dein testis in Baream, proditor corruptorque amicitiae cuius se magistrum ferebat*, 'Celer had made a profession of wisdom, but by giving evidence against Barea he had betrayed and corrupted that friendship of which he called himself a teacher', 4.10) and the *pietas* that requires Musonius to call him to account is the duty he owes to the way of life to which he has dedicated himself. But the real confrontation comes when a rival philosopher, Demetrius the Cynic, intervenes on Celer's side:

iustum iudicium explesse Musonius uidebatur, diuersa fama Demetrio Cynicam sectam professo, quod manifestum reum ambiciosius quam honestius defendisset: ipsi Publio neque animus in periculis neque oratio suppeditaui.

(Tacitus, *Historiae* 4.40)

⁹ Cf. Toynbee (1944) 55f., who speaks of Helvidius being 'embittered and disillusioned' by the escape of the Neronian *delatores*.

¹⁰ For the date, see Syme (1958) 212 and n. 1; the year is that of Eprius Marcellus' second consulship. For Vespasian's reluctance to eliminate Helvidius and his change of mind, see Suet. *Vesp.* 15.

Musonius was thought to have fulfilled the role demanded by justice, but for Demetrius, an adherent of the Cynic school, there was a very different opinion, since the view was that he had defended someone who was obviously guilty for ostentation rather than honour. Publius himself lost all spirit and power of speech in his moment of peril.

But Tacitus suppresses the debate, having mentioned it only to make rhetorical capital out of the reactions to it that he records.¹¹ Let us reconstruct it. Musonius justifies his actions on the ground that he is attacking moral hypocrisy; Celer pretended to be a philosopher but was not. Both Musonius himself and his pupil Epictetus have harsh words to say (or so their *amanuenses* record) about philosophical *poseurs*.¹² Yes (Demetrius replies), but are you not equally hypocritical? Did you not conduct a seminar on whether the philosopher would prosecute anyone for *hubris* (Muson. frag. 10) and did you not there maintain the position, with numerous arguments, that he would not? I am a respected member of your circle; I was there when Thrasea received the instruction to die; it was me he turned to as his lifeblood flowed away (Tac. *Ann.* 16.35); but I am not here seeking vendetta. And, what is more, here you are with the rest of your gang taking advantage of the new political situation to settle old scores. Celer is being used as a scapegoat; you're being allowed to get away with this, because it suits *them* to draw a distinction between themselves and Nero. Don't expect me to join in their games.—No wonder Celer is silent. *Manifestus reus* ('obviously guilty'), he becomes the occasion for, not a participant in, this confrontation.¹³

Demetrius is of course ignored (in the narrative and by the senate). His motives are misrepresented as a desire to get himself noticed by attacking the honourable (as the senate saw it) conduct of Musonius. That is their perception of what Cynics do.¹⁴ Musonius is also misrepresented (*Sorani manibus satis factum*, 'satisfaction given to the shade

¹¹ In fact, it could hardly have happened as Tacitus implies it did: did a Cynic philosopher of Demetrius' known lifestyle *really* address the senate?

¹² Muson. frag. 12 (Lutz [1947] 84.3–6); Dio Chrys. *Or.* 34.3, 77/78.34–5; Arr. *Epict.* Diss. 4.1.132–43.

¹³ Various explanations for Demetrius' defence of Celer have been advanced: 'sheer cussedness' (Toynbee [1944] 53); a belief that Soranus was actually guilty as charged (Kindstrand [1980] 97–8); a thought-provoking challenge to conventional values (Griffin [1996] 197). The reconstruction offered here presumes that Demetrius' prime motivation is to attack Musonius; the particular case merely provides a convenient pretext.

¹⁴ The common perception of the Cynic is well exemplified (almost caricatured) in Mucianus' characterisation of 'Stoics' at Cass. Dio 65.13.1a: ... αὐχήματος κενού

of Soranus', Tac. *Hist.* 4.40, suggesting a belief about the afterlife inconsistent with Stoic doctrine).¹⁵ But at least there is a sense that this contest is a philosophical (that is, moral) one. That between Helvidius and Eprius Marcellus on the other hand is clearly political. No one (except Demetrius) has a problem with Musonius' prosecution of Celer (*iustum iudicium explesse Musonius uidebatur*, 'Musonius was thought to have fulfilled the role demanded by justice', 4.40); Helvidius' overt pursuit of *ultio* ('vendetta') is partisan and divisive (*ea ultio, incertum maior an iustior, senatum in studia diduxerat*, 'that act of vengeance, perhaps excessive, perhaps righteous, had polarised the senate', 4.6). It fails—but the die has been cast, as Tacitus ominously foreshadows: *isque praecipuus illi dies magnae offensae initium et magnae gloriae fuit* ('that day in particular was for him [Helvidius] the beginning of great offence and of great glory', 4.4), the context in which to read *erant quibus adpetentior famae uideretur* ('there were those to whom he seemed too keen on acquiring fame', 4.6).

Histrionics, role-playing, a tinge of disingenuousness; Eprius himself draws attention to Helvidius' weakness as part of his counter-attack: *denique constantia fortitudine Catonibus et Brutis aequaretur Helvidius* ('so let Helvidius put himself on a par with the Catos and Brutuses', *Hist.* 4.8). Then a warning:

suadere etiam Prisco ne supra principem scanderet, ne Vespasianum senem triumphalem, iuuenum liberorum patrem, praeceptis coeceret. quo modo pessimis imperatoribus sine fine dominationem, ita quamuis egregiis modum libertatis placere.

(Tacitus, *Historiae* 4.8)

εἰσι πεπληρωμένοι, κἂν τὸν πάγωνά τις αὐτῶν καθῇ καὶ τὰς ὀφρύας ἀνασπάσῃ τὸ τε τριβώνιον ἀναβάλλῃται καὶ ἀνυπόδητος βαδίσῃ, σοφὸς εὐθὺς ἀνδρείος δίκαιός φησιν εἶναι, καὶ πνεῖ ἐφ' ἑαυτῷ μέγα, κἂν τὸ λεγόμενον διὰ τοῦτο μῆτε γράμματα μῆτε νεῖν ἐπίστηται. καὶ πάντας ὑπερορῶσι, καὶ τὸν μὲν εὐγενῇ τηθαλλαδοῦν τὸν δὲ ἀγενῇ σμικρόφρονα, καὶ τὸν μὲν καλὸν ἀσελγῇ τὸν δὲ αἰσχρὸν εὐφυᾶ, τὸν δὲ πλούσιον πλεονέκτην τὸν δὲ πένητα δουλοπρεπῇ καλοῦσι. (. . . they are full of empty self-advertisement and if one of them lets his beard grow, draws back his eyebrows, throws a worn cloak over his shoulders and walks around in bare feet, he immediately declares himself wise, courageous and just and puffs himself up, even though [as the saying has it] he can't yet read, write or swim. They look down on everyone, calling a well-born man a granny's boy, a low-born man a pea-brain, a handsome man a rake, an ugly man a simpleton, a rich man a grasper and a poor man only fit for slavery.). Cf. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 32.9.

¹⁵ In Roman Stoicism individuality did not survive death: Sen. *Ep.* 54.4; Arr. *Epict. Diss.* 3.24.93–4; Arnold (1911) 125–6, 269–70.

He would also advise Priscus not to climb above the *princeps*, and not to impose his moral strictures on Vespasian, a senior statesman honoured with a triumph and father of grown-up sons. Just as the worst emperors desire power without end, so even the best ones want some limit placed on freedom.

Here Tacitus shows how astutely Eprius reads both his opponent and the political realities. Helvidius' attitude to Vespasian is born not simply of frustration at being unable to get his way, nor of philosophical idealism, though both play their part. He is bent on making the same name for himself as his father-in-law, to play the role of conscience of the nation, even where there is no real need for one. There is ambition here, too. *Princeps* is a politically charged term; *pax et principatus* had been the reality in the century after Actium since Augustus *cuncta discordiis civilibus fessa nomine principis sub imperium accepit* ('took a whole world wearied by civil strife under his control with the name of *princeps*', Tac. *Ann.* 1.1). But to one intent on playing republican games, of doing the Cato/Brutus thing, *princeps* is the ideal statesman envisioned in book 5 of Cicero's *De Re Publica* (5.6–9).¹⁶ By drawing attention to Vespasian's 'grown-up sons', Eprius underlines the fact that in reality the system is a dynastic monarchy and foreshadows Vespasian's remark to Helvidius that 'either my son shall succeed me or no one'.¹⁷ Helvidius' attempt to take the high moral ground is to challenge the now accepted meaning of *princeps*, to 'climb above it'. Vespasian's refusal to continue the proceedings that would have given him his *ultio* gave him both pretext and impetus to play the role that would bring him fame. In the end his refusal to acknowledge the necessary *modus libertatis* became intolerable.

To write this opposition as primarily 'Stoic' or 'philosophical' is to construct it as Helvidius would have it remembered¹⁸ rather than as Tacitus records. For the philosopher who was tutored by Musonius and banished from Rome by the third Flavian, it was the conduct

¹⁶ Cf. Penwill (1995) 70–4.

¹⁷ Cass. Dio 65.12.1; cf. Suet. *Vesp.* 25. It is Cassius Dio who makes the remark a response to Helvidius' constant attacks. Helvidius' refusal to address Vespasian as 'Caesar' (Suet. *Vesp.* 15) is to draw attention to the deceptive nature of the *princeps* signifier. 'Caesar' as family name cannot belong to Vespasian; but not to use it denies any right to the office other than superior military force. It also problematises Vespasian's own plans for the succession. Cf. Harris (1977) 113.

¹⁸ And it is still so remembered: Wirszubski (1950) 143–50; MacMullen (1966) 55–7.

of a man of integrity, a Stoic hero (Arr. *Epict. Diss.* 2.19–24); to the historian who acknowledges the contribution made to his career by the Flavians and made consul-designate by Domitian shortly before his assassination,¹⁹ such self-destructive behaviour is of dubious value.²⁰ Contrast too the following representations of ‘Stoic opposition’, one from the philosopher just mentioned, the other from a Flavian poet:

τί οὖν ὠφέλησε Πρίσκος εἰς ὦν; τί δ' ὠφελεῖ ἡ πορφύρα τὸ ἱμάτιον; τί γὰρ ἄλλο ἢ διαπρέπει ἐν αὐτῷ ὡς πορφύρα καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις δὲ καλὸν παράδειγμα ἔκκειται;

(Arrian, *Epicteti Dissertationes* 1.2.22)

So what good did Priscus do when he was just one person? What good does the purple [thread] do the cloak? What else other than that it stands out in it as purple and is set out as a beautiful example to the rest?

quod magni Thraseae consummatique Catonis
dogmata sic sequeris saluos ut esse uelis,
pectore nec nudo strictos incurris in ensis,
quod fecisse uelim te, Deciane, facis.
nolo uirum facili redemit qui sanguine famam;
hunc uolo, laudari qui sine morte potest.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 1.8)

Thræsea the great, Cato the consummate—
their doctrines you follow, but avoid the dangers,
no bared breast rushing upon drawn swords.
Decianus, you're doing just what I would have you do.
I reject the man who buys fame with easy blood;
I want the one who can win praise without death.

Epictetus' καλὸν παράδειγμα ('beautiful example') is Martial's *facili sanguine* ('easy blood'); under the principate anyone can make themselves a martyr ('bared breast rushing upon drawn swords'),²¹ but to

¹⁹ Tac. *Hist.* 1.1; for Domitian rather than Nerva as the one who appointed Tacitus consul-designate for 97, see Syme (1958) 70.

²⁰ He has already passed the same judgement on the younger Helvidius and his cronies; see below, pp. 361–2. He will do the same for Thræsea: *Ann.* 14.12.

²¹ Cf. Casperius Aelianus, praetorian prefect, to Domitian (Philostr. *VA* 7.16): ὁ βασιλεὺς . . . κουφολόγον οἱ σοφισταὶ χρῆμα καὶ ἀλαζῶν ἡ τέχνη, καὶ ἐπεὶ μηδὲν χρηστὸν τοῦ εἶναι ἀπολαύουσι, θανάτου γλίσχονται, καὶ οὐ περιμένουσιν αὐτοῦ τὸ αὐτόματον, ἀλλ' ἐπισπῶνται τὸν θάνατον ἐκκαλοῦμενοι τοὺς ἔχοντας ξίφη ('O king, sophists are a talkative lot and their art is empty show. Since they get nothing useful out of existence, they long for death; and they don't wait for death to come by itself, but pull it down on them by provoking those who have swords.').

what end? To fashion moral imperatives out of these historical *exempla* becomes an empty and self-defeating exercise. Helvidius fails in his attempt to avenge Thrasea's death, so he will reveal the hypocrisy of the regime by recreating it instead.²² The action is inappropriate, naive and politically inept—buying fame with easy blood, instead of playing a constructive role in either politics or philosophy. As another of Martial's epigrams to Decianus shows (1.39), it is perfectly possible to live a morally upright life devoted to scholarship without incurring the displeasure of the palace; and the companion poem (1.40) characterises anyone who does not regard such a life as a worthy object of praise as *liuidus* ('spiteful'). Decianus is surely a better *exemplum* than Helvidius; to surrender yourself to family tradition in the way he chose is indeed to expel the mind.

Caesar and the Philosopher: A (Socratic?) Dialectic

History remembers Demetrius as the Cynic. For the philosophers the Cynic has a proper contempt for the pretensions of those who wield supreme power (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 6.35–62; Arr. *Epict. Diss.* 3.22.30–44) and a moral duty to make public declaration of his reasons (*Epict. Diss.* 3.22.26). Epictetus constructs a 'dialogue' between the Cynic and Agamemnon, in which the philosopher points out to the king the source of his spiritual malaise and his inability to perceive the fallacies underlying his attitudes and actions (see esp. 3.22.31–7). For the historian such a stance constitutes *philosophorum contumacia* ('the "proud and defiant behaviour"²³ of the philosophers', Suet. *Vesp.* 13), a refusal to observe the *modus libertatis*. The dialogue between Demetrius and Vespasian is represented as mindless insult on the philosopher's side and a series of 'dog' jokes on the emperor's (*Vesp.* 13; Cass. Dio 65.13.3).²⁴ Any possibility that might have existed for fruitful communication was quickly ended when Vespasian as part

²² Helvidius following family tradition: Thrasea to Helvidius at Tac. *Ann.* 16.35 (*specta, iuuenis; et omen quidem dii prohibeant, ceterum in ea tempora natus es quibus firmare animum expediat constantibus exemplis*, 'Watch, young man; may the gods avert the omen, but you have been born into times when you may need to strengthen your spirit with examples of resolution'). The young man watched, all right...

²³ OLD s.v. *contumacia*.

²⁴ An old joke (κυνικός/κύων), but appropriate for an emperor who enjoyed verbal witticisms (Suet. *Vesp.* 22–3).

of his general expulsion of philosophers confined Demetrius to his island kennel.

Musonius on the other hand was exempted from banishment. Why? It cannot have been a matter of status; being Roman did not save G. Tullius Hostilianus.²⁵ Musonius had of course already endured a spell on the island of Gyaros courtesy of Nero (Philostr. *VA* 7.16);²⁶ it will have suited Vespasian's image to be seen to avoid repeating an act of injustice perpetrated by a predecessor he had an interest in vilifying.²⁷ Allowing Musonius to succeed in his prosecution of Celer will have had a similar function. Musonius' homilies against sexual and gastronomic excesses (see esp. frags 12, 18, 19, 20) contain material that could usefully be used against the last of the Julio-Claudians, the account of whose extravagances in the tradition is no doubt influenced by Flavian propaganda.²⁸ The elder Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* contains numerous examples.²⁹ In particular, the attack on extravagance in building and furnishings that occupies the latter part of fragment 19 could certainly be used not only against the ostentatiousness of the Domus Aurea but also as a philosophical back-up to the new policy of frugality and fiscal restraint.³⁰

But it did not last. Since there are historical sources that tell us that Musonius was recalled from exile by Titus (Jer. *Chron. Eus.* 81 CE; Them. *Or.* 13.173c), it would appear that he eventually fol-

²⁵ For the identification of G. Tullius Hostilianus with Cassius Dio's Hostilianus, see Griffin (1996) 194 and n. 13. There is no way of knowing precisely what Hostilianus had done to anger Vespasian.

²⁶ There is no actual source for the date or circumstances of his return, but it is generally assumed to have taken place during Galba's reign. For Galba's restoration of those exiled by Nero under the *maiestas* law, see Cass. Dio 63.3.4c.

²⁷ Cf. Franchet d'Espèrey (1986) 3058.

²⁸ That Musonius himself may have contributed to Vespasian's denigration of Nero is suggested by frag. 31: οὐ πολλὸν διάγουσι χρόνον οἱ πρὸς τοὺς ὑπηκόους ὑπὲρ ὧν ἂν πράττωσι μὴ τὸ 'καθέκει μοι' λέγειν μεμελετηκότες, ἀλλὰ τὸ 'ἔξεστί μοι' ('A short life is theirs whose concern it is to justify their actions by saying not "I have a duty to do this" but "I have the power"'). Compare Suet. *Nero* 37.3: *negavit quemquam principum scisse quid sibi liceret* ('He [Nero] said that none of the emperors had realised what he could do'). See Sherwin-White (1966) 244. On the propagandistic tendency of Flavian historians, see Tac. *Hist.* 2.101; cf. Franchet d'Espèrey (1986) 3061–9; Baldwin (1995) 59–61.

²⁹ See Beagon (1992) 17–18 with examples there cited.

³⁰ An important element of Vespasian's policy (or at least public image) that Philostratus has Apollonius commend to Vespasian (*VA* 5.36)—with more understanding of the practical difficulties involved than one finds in the moral strictures of Musonius.

lowed his fellow-philosophers into exile after all. This may well be linked to the exile and death of Helvidius, with whom Musonius presumably had some association, even though he may not have approved of his provocative actions.³¹ But as the reign went on, the philosopher's stance became more obviously at odds with imperial behaviour. Fragment 8, "Ὅτι φιλοσοφεῖον καὶ τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν ('That Kings Too Should Study Philosophy'), purports to be addressed to a client king of Syria; but the issues it raises come uncomfortably close to the Palatine. In order to rule wisely and well, to acquire the virtues of justice, self-control and courage, to learn how to see through specious arguments, a king needs to study philosophy, indeed to be a philosopher. At the close of this piece of instruction, the king, suitably grateful, asks Musonius to name his reward:

ὁ οὖν Μουσώνιος, αἰτῶ σε, ἔφη, τούτοις στοιχεῖν καὶ ἔπεσθαι τοῖς λόγοις, οὓς ἐπαινεῖς· καὶ γὰρ ἐμοὶ οὕτω χαριεῖ μάλιστα καὶ ὠφελήθησιν αὐτὸς οὐχ ἑτέρως μᾶλλον.

(Musonius frag. 8 *fin.*)³²

So Musonius replied, 'I ask you to conform and adhere to this teaching that you are endorsing; for in this way and in no other will you best express your gratitude to me and benefit yourself'.

Those who seek to promote themselves as just and fairminded, who draw on part of a philosopher's teaching or selectively promote it for their own ideological ends, are guilty of moral hypocrisy if they do not accept the whole system. The conclusion of this discourse effectively accuses Vespasian of ingratitude, in that he does not 'conform and adhere to' teaching that he (by implication) endorses. Fine to use bits of it to denigrate your predecessor—but what about the uncompromising position on marriage (Muson. frags 12–13)? χρῆ δὲ τοὺς μὴ τρυφῶντας ἢ μὴ κακοὺς μόνα μὲν ἀφροδίσια νομίζειν δίκαια τὰ ἐν γάμῳ καὶ ἐπὶ γενέσει παίδων συντελούμενα ('Unless you are addicted to riotous living or morally worthless, you have to regard sex as lawful only within marriage and engaged in for the procreation

³¹ Cf. Muson. frag. 9 (Lutz [1947] 72.32–3): οὐ γὰρ ἀεὶ καὶ πανταχοῦ καὶ πρὸς ὅντινοῦν λεκτέον ἃ φρονοῦμεν ('One should not always and everywhere and to anyone say what one is thinking'). This shows that in general Musonius is aware of the *modus libertatis* enjoined upon those who take part in the political life of the capital.

³² Lutz (1947) 66.29–31.

of children').³³ Vespasian certainly set great store by his legitimately born sons, but the love of his life was the freedwoman Caenis (Suet. *Vesp.* 3; Cass. Dio 65.14.1–4), after whose death he indulged himself with numerous *pallacae* ('girl-friends', Suet. *Vesp.* 21). How might such a man feel to be told that a man who sleeps with a female slave is morally in the same position as a woman who sleeps with a male one (Muson. frag. 12)³⁴—particularly when he has been the author of legislation imposing severe penalties on free-born women indulging in such relationships (Suet. *Vesp.* 11)?³⁵ And when in fragment 19 Musonius attacks the expense incurred by those who build extravagant houses, saying that the money so expended could be put to better use in beneficial public works (ἀφ' ὧν ἂν τις ἐδυνήθη καὶ δημοσίᾳ καὶ ἰδίᾳ πολλοὺς ἀνθρώπους εὐεργετήσαι),³⁶ one wonders whether he would agree that building a giant stadium for the staging of gladiatorial shows and other public spectacles qualifies as a benefit.³⁷ Musonius was never reluctant to speak his mind, even when it was manifestly impolitic to do so. His attempt during the troubles of 69 CE to engage Antonius Primus' troops in a Socratic discussion on the superiority of peace over war, criticised not unreasonably as *intempestiua sapientia* ('untimely wisdom', Tac. *Hist.* 3.81), nearly led to violence;³⁸ confronting the emperor on his life-choices and policy decisions was to meet with a similarly hostile response. This mind too was expelled, retreating to compose (or meditate upon) the discourse "Ὅτι οὐ κακὸν ἡ φυγή" ('That Exile Is Not a Disaster', Muson. frag. 9).³⁹

³³ Lutz (1947) 86.4–6.

³⁴ Lutz (1947) 86.29–88.6.

³⁵ For Vespasian's touchiness about criticism of the private lives of himself and his sons, see Cass. Dio 65.15.5. Diogenes and Heras, two Cynic philosophers, had managed to sneak back to Rome and publicly criticised Titus' relationship with Berenice. Diogenes was flogged, Heras beheaded (the ultimate mind-expulsion).

³⁶ Lutz (1947) 122.25–6.

³⁷ It is generally accepted that Musonius is the person referred to by Dio Chrysostom as the 'person inferior in breeding to no Roman' (ἐκείνον γένει . . . Ῥωμαίων μηδενὸς ὕστερον) who harangued the Athenians on the gross impropriety of staging gladiatorial shows in the Theatre of Dionysus (*Or.* 31.122). For another contemporary philosophic opposition to such shows, see Plut. *Mor.* 997C.

³⁸ The Athenians reacted similarly: Musonius was forced to leave the city (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 31.122). Perhaps we can on these counts accuse Musonius of not taking his own advice (above, n. 31).

³⁹ This discourse has the appearance of a letter. The unnamed addressee is an exile complaining about his situation (Lutz [1947] 68.4); the writer speaks of himself as currently in exile (Lutz [1947] 74.13–19). It is tempting to speculate that

Thus the capital was finally rid of discomfiting ideologies, leaving the *princeps*' world-view unchallenged. One of the reasons why kings should study philosophy, says Musonius, is that they should be as invincible in reasoning power as they are in arms (βασιλικόν . . . τὸ ἀήττητον ἐν λόγῳ εἶναι, 'it belongs to a king not to be worsted in argument', frag. 8).⁴⁰ An alternative way to achieve this is to expel all those who can successfully argue against you. Lack of real political issues to engage the passions of orators is said by Curvatus Maternus in Tacitus' *Dialogus de Oratoribus* (dramatic date shortly after Helvidius' banishment)⁴¹ to be the main reason why oratory has declined since Cicero's day (40); it is the price we pay for living in more settled times. Who needs to be able to argue a case when the country is so clearly in the very best of hands?:

quid enim opus est longis in senatu sententiis, cum optimi cito consentiant? quid multis apud populum contionibus, cum de re publica non imperiti et multi deliberent, sed sapientissimus et unus?

(Tacitus, *Dialogus de Oratoribus* 41.4)

For what need is there of long expressions of opinion in the senate, when the leading citizens quickly come to an agreement? What need of all those consultations of the people, when it is not the inexperienced multitude who are deliberating about the public good but the One Most Wise?

What need indeed. The mordant irony of Maternus' words underscores the fact that the *sapientia* of the philosopher has been deemed irremediably *intempestiva* ('untimely'); in Flavian Rome it is the *princeps* who bears the title of *sapientissimus* ('most wise'). Intellectual enquiry shifts from political and moral philosophy to the encyclopaedic amassing of facts, *sterilis materia, rerum natura, hoc est uita* ('barren subject-matter, the world of nature, i.e. life', Plin. *HN praef.* 13). Pliny dedicates his monumental opus to Titus (*te . . . summa eloquentia, summa eruditione praeditum*, 'you . . . endowed with the utmost eloquence, the utmost learning', *HN praef.* 11) and gloats over the fact that none of the philosophers has in ten years been able to respond to his *De Grammatica* (*praef.* 28). No wonder they were unable to respond: they

Musonius wrote it from Gyaros to Helvidius when both were in exile during the last years of Nero's reign.

⁴⁰ Lutz [1947] 62.31-2.

⁴¹ Syme (1991) 574.

were either banished or driven underground. Caesar's is the only mind in town.

Priorum Temporum Immanitas: *Domitian*

History writes Domitian as a tyrant, another Nero;⁴² the misfortune he shared with Nero was to be the last member of a dynasty.⁴³ Dio Chrysostom speaks of Domitian's reign as one where 'because of fear everyone felt they had to lie' (*Or.* 3.13); the younger Pliny dwells on 'the barbarity [*immanitas*] of the past' in which exile was the lot of *sapientiae doctores* ('professors of wisdom', *Pan.* 47.1); and the grim picture is enhanced by Tacitus with images of repression and book-burning:

scilicet illo igne uocem populi Romani et libertatem senatus et conscientiam generis humani aboleri arbitrabantur, expulsis insuper sapientiae professoribus atque omni bona arte in exilium acta, nequid usquam honestum occurreret.

(Tacitus, *Agricola* 2.2)

No doubt they thought that in that fire the voice of the Roman people, the liberty of the senate and the conscience of the human race were being wiped out, particularly since the professors of wisdom were expelled and every good art driven into exile, so that nothing honourable should get in their way.

For Tacitus the entire reign is a melancholy series of tyrannical acts given the seal of approval by a cowed and servile senate: fifteen years of unrelieved oppression, fifteen years excised from our lives (*exemptis e media uita tot* [sc. *XV*] *annis*, Tac. *Agr.* 3.2). Dio Chrysostom driven into exile to wander the world like a latter-day Odysseus (*Or.* 13.4, 10),⁴⁴ Epictetus banished to set up his philosophical school in Nicopolis, the 'Stoic opposition' once more providing its quota of martyrs, all under an emperor who, finding the role of *sapientissimus et unus* too limiting, styles himself *dominus et deus* ('lord and god').⁴⁵

⁴² For 'Domitian-as-Nero', see Mart. *Epigr.* 11.33; Plin. *Pan.* 53.4; Juv. *Sat.* 4.38; Tert. *Pall.* 4.5.

⁴³ 'The successful blackguarding of Domitian's character... is just one example... of attempts to pervert recent history in the interest of political groups': Waters (1964) 77.

⁴⁴ On 'Dio-as-Odysseus', cf. Moles (1978) 97.

⁴⁵ One of the most notorious facts in the tradition about Domitian: see, e.g.,

God and maker of gods (Stat. *Silv.* 4.2.59–60, 4.3.18–19, 5.1.240–1), knowing everything that is going on in the minds of his subjects (*cuncta suorum nouit*, 5.1.79–80),⁴⁶ what need does such a person have of philosophy?

Domitian was always going to have an image problem. As the elder Pliny was to promote the interests of Vespasian by denigrating Nero, so his nephew performs the same service for Trajan, drawing explicit comparisons between Domitianic repression and Trajanic tolerance. Domitian vilifies and banishes philosophers, Trajan restores and honours them. Domitian's hostility to the life of the mind and freedom of expression reverberates through the accounts and notices of his reign in Tacitus, Pliny, Juvenal, Suetonius, Dio Chrysostom, Cassius Dio, Philostratus and the Christian fathers. In Suetonius we find him at the end of his reign immersed solely in the *commentarii* and *acta* of Tiberius (*Dom.* 20), losing his hair while the philosophers were flaunting theirs,⁴⁷ and desperately afraid of conspiracies (14). For Cassius Dio, practising philosophy itself was a crime:

τὸν γὰρ δὴ 'Ρούστικον τὸν 'Αρουλῆνον ἀπέκτεινεν ὅτι ἐφιλοσόφει καὶ ὅτι τὸν Θρασέαν ἱερὸν ὠνομάζε. . . ἄλλοι τε ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς ταύτης τῆς κατὰ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν αἰτίας συχνοὶ διώλοντο, καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ πάντες ἐξηλάθησαν αὐθις ἐκ τῆς 'Ρώμης.

(Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 67.13.2–3)

Mart. *Epigr.* 10.72; Suet. *Dom.* 13.2; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 45.1; Cass. Dio 67.13.4. For a more balanced view, see Waters (1964) 67.

⁴⁶ An unwitting irony on the poet's part, given Domitian's death in a palace coup.

⁴⁷ *De Cura Capillorum* ('Looking After One's Hair') was (apart from some possible youthful poetic endeavours—Williams [1978] 141, on which see now Penwill [2000] *passim*) Domitian's major contribution to Roman literature (Suet. *Dom.* 18). Suetonius mentions Domitian's sensitivity to jokes about his baldness (*Dom.* 18); to this one may relate not only Juvenal's *caluus* ('bald') *Nero* jibe (*Dom.* 4.38) but also Pliny's description of the philosopher Euphrates' luxuriously hirsute appearance (*Ep.* 1.10.6) and Dio Chrysostom's *Κόμης ἐγκώμιον* ('Encomium on Hair'). On 'hairiness' as philosophic identifier, see Muson. frag. 21; Mart. *Epigr.* 1.24, 9.27.7, 9.47; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 72.2; Arr. *Epict. Diss.* 1.16.9–14, 2.23.21, 3.1.24, 4.8.4–6. For the philosophers hair and beard were the natural attributes of a man (see esp. Arr. *Epict. Diss.* 3.1.27–45 and Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.17; hence the humour in Mart. *Epigr.* 1.24 and 9.47, where the *pilosi* ['hairy guys'] behave like women). It is tempting to see a dialectic of image here (balding emperor/hairy philosopher); such may well underlie Philostratus' narrative of Domitian cutting off Apollonius' hair (*VA* 7.34). There is also the potential play on words: while lack of *caesaries* ('hair') did not damage the first Caesar (Suet. *Jul.* 51), one can imagine that some of the jokes occasioned by Domitian's baldness may well have reflected on the legitimacy of his claim to that hairy title. Philosophers more *caesariati* ('hairy') than *Caesar*? And how hairy a joke is Statius' description of Earinus as *Caesareus puer* ('Caesar's boy') in a poem celebrating the dedication of the young man's tresses (*Silv.* 3.4.7)?

He killed Arulenus Rusticus because he was a philosopher and because he gave Thrasea the sobriquet 'holy'. . . . A large number of others perished on this same charge of philosophising and those who were left were once more driven out of Rome.

The dialectic of Vespasian's reign continues. The son of his father's executioner condemns the younger Helvidius Priscus to death, and the pupils of Musonius Rufus likewise inherit his sentence of exile: Dio Chrysostom early in the reign,⁴⁸ Epictetus, Euphrates and Artemidorus towards the end.

However, despite what the historians and the panegyricists of the new age were to say, philosophy was never a crime during Domitian's reign. The book-burnings of Tacitus' lurid account were the destruction of certain 'scurrilous and defamatory pamphlets' (*scripta famosa uulgoque edita*), whose suppression Domitian saw as part of his duty as censor to protect the reputations of *primores uiri ac feminae* ('high-ranking men and women', Suet. *Dom.* 8.3). Plutarch was giving lectures in Rome with Arulenus Rusticus as a member of the audience (*De Curios.* 522D–E).⁴⁹ Dio Chrysostom by his own account was banished not because he was a philosopher but because of his association with a person intimately connected with the ruling family who had fallen from favour and been executed (*Or.* 13.1);⁵⁰ indeed, also by his own account, he was not even to be regarded as a philosopher at that time, since he acquired that title during the course of his wanderings (13.11). The 'Stoic opposition' played the same political games in the pursuit of martyrdom as their predecessors in the reigns of Nero and Vespasian; and Domitian tolerated them for far longer than his father had done.⁵¹ Of the three who were condemned to death, none was executed for practising philosophy. The outraged

⁴⁸ But cf. Jones (1990) 354, who argues for the same date as the other three.

⁴⁹ For a reconstruction of Plutarch's activities in Rome under Domitian, see Jones (1971) 22–5.

⁵⁰ Usually identified as T. Flavius Sabinus: see von Arnim (1898) 228–31. For discussion and alternative theories, see Jones (1990) 348–54; Sidebottom (1996) 450–3.

⁵¹ A fact too often ignored, as, for example, by MacMullen (1966) 55–6. Arulenus Rusticus and Helvidius junior were executed in 93 CE, twelve years after Domitian's accession. Both had not only been tolerated but actually advanced by the *princeps*: Helvidius was suffect consul early in the reign (before 86), Rusticus as late as 92. See Sherwin-White (1966) 95, 242–3; Jones (1992) 122–3. The third member of the trio condemned to death on this occasion, Herennius Senecio, would have been similarly advanced but refused to accept any office after his quaestorship (Cass. Dio 67.13.2, where this is given as one of the grounds of his condemnation).

sources allege their crimes to have been publication of material that the emperor found subversive: Herennius Senecio a laudatory biography of the elder Helvidius (Tac. *Agr.* 2.1; Cass. Dio 67.13.2), the younger Helvidius a play about Paris and Oenone that was interpreted as a satire on Domitian's relationship with his wife Domitia Longina (Suet. *Dom.* 10.4),⁵² and Arulenus Rusticus a laudatory biography of Thrasea (Tac. *Agr.* 2.1; Suet. *Dom.* 10.3; Cass. Dio 67.13.2).⁵³ All three were clearly engaged in the dangerous game of emperor-baiting, much as Tacitus was to depict Maternus doing with his *Cato* and *Thyestes* in the *Dialogus de Oratoribus* (2.1, 3.3); all three were to pay the price—and thus make themselves eminently usable as grounds for denigrating Domitian. Martial's Decianus shows that it was perfectly possible to live the philosophical life in Rome during Domitian's reign;⁵⁴ and we must assume that Musonius continued to be active in the capital along with his disciple Epictetus and son-in-law Artemidorus.⁵⁵ The expulsion only occurred because Domitian blamed their philosophical connections for the political activities of Helvidius, Senecio and Rusticus, a view for which he had his father's precedent (Suet. *Dom.* 10.3).

A view not confined to Domitian. Despite extracting the maximum amount of rhetorical effect from the activities and martyrdoms of the 'Stoic opposition' in the *Agricola* (2.1, 45.1), Tacitus is by no means unequivocally supportive:

sciant, quibus moris est inlicita mirari, posse etiam sub malis principibus magnos uiros esse, obsequiumque ac modestiam, si industria ac uigor adsint, eo laudis excedere, quo plerique per abrupta sed in nulum rei publicae usum ambitiosa morte inclaruerunt.

(Tacitus, *Agricola* 42.4)

⁵² Domitia was alleged to have had an affair with the actor Paris (*Dom.* 3.1). On Flavian sensitivity to what was perceived as criticism of their private lives, see above, n. 35.

⁵³ Suetonius omits any mention of Senecio and gives both biographies to Rusticus.

⁵⁴ See above, pp. 352–3.

⁵⁵ Musonius returned to Rome in Titus' reign (Jer. *Chron. Eus.* 81 CE; Them. *Or.* 13.173c). Pliny records meetings with Artemidorus and Euphrates when he was a young man serving as a military tribune in Syria (*Ep.* 1.10.2, 3.11.5). Syme dates Pliny's military service to 82–83 CE; Artemidorus will have returned at some point after that. Epictetus was the slave of Nero's freedman Epaphroditus, and thus would have been domiciled in Rome throughout Domitian's reign; his discourse on the perils of engaging a wealthy consular in Socratic dialectic (Arr. *Epict. Diss.* 2.12.17–25) is an obvious reminiscence of his philosophical activity during this period: cf. Millar (1965) 142–3. Musonius was most probably dead by the time of the expulsion; the language of Plin. *Ep.* 1.10.5 certainly suggests this.

Take note, those whose habit it is to admire what is forbidden, that great men can exist even under evil emperors, and that deference and moderation, if diligence and energy are present, attain to the same level of praiseworthiness as many have gained via the precipitous course (though of no advantage whatever to the state) of making themselves famous by an ostentatious death.

In this passage Tacitus draws a clear distinction between the career paths of Agricola on the one hand and Helvidius and his cronies on the other. 'Admiring what is forbidden' (that is, publishing politically charged biographies) may give you a warm inner glow and the 'ostentatious death' a place in the book of remembrance, but there is no benefit to the *res publica*, the common good. Agricola on the other hand achieved something; and for this we must thank his mother for not permitting him to indulge his passion for philosophy *ultra quam concessum Romano ac senatori* ('beyond what is permissible for a Roman and a senator', Tac. *Agr.* 4.3).

A similarly suspicious attitude to philosophy is found in Quintilian,⁵⁶ whose *Institutio Oratoria* constitutes the major intellectual work surviving from Domitian's reign just as Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* is from Vespasian's. It too reflects the way the mind was encouraged to work in Flavian times; the education that received government endorsement and financial support was in rhetoric, not moral philosophy (Suet. *Vesp.* 18), and it was to Quintilian that Domitian entrusted the education of his designated heirs, the sons of his niece Flavia Domitilla and T. Flavius Clemens (*Inst.* 4 *praef.* 2–3). Quintilian sees himself as responsible for both their moral (*mores*) and intellectual (*studia*) training, reflecting his belief that it is the orator, not the philosopher, who has the major claim to the possession of virtue:

neque enim hoc concesserim, rationem rectae honestaeque uitae (ut quidam putauerunt) ad philosophos relegandam, cum uir ille uere ciuilis et publicarum priuatarumque rerum administrationi accommodatus, qui regere consiliis urbes, fundare legibus, emendare iudiciis possit, non alius sit profecto quam orator.

(Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 1 *praef.* 10)

Nor would I concede that the rationale of the upright and honourable life (as some have thought) should be the province of philosophers, since the man who is a citizen in the true sense and fitted for the

⁵⁶ On Quintilian's hostility towards philosophy, see Kennedy (1969) 126–7.

administration of public and private affairs, who is capable of guiding cities by his advice, giving them proper foundations by his legislation and setting them straight by his judgements, this is assuredly none other than the orator.

It is the orator who requires the cardinal virtues of courage, justice and self-control, and that is imparted to him by his training; certainly the works of the major philosophers should be studied as part of this training, but they are subordinate to this higher end. And in any case, you won't find any genuine philosophers around these days; most of them are worthless fellows who seek to conceal their vices under the guise of a gloomy countenance and idiosyncratic clothing (*uultum et tristitiam et dissidentem a ceteris habitum pessimis moribus praetendebant*, *Inst.* 1 *praef.* 15; cf. 12.3.12).⁵⁷ Quintilian shares Tacitus' view that such people are useless to the state:

at uir ciuilis uereque sapiens, qui se non otiosis disputationibus, sed administrationi rei publicae dederit, a qua longissime isti, qui philosophi uocantur, recesserunt. . . .

(Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 11.1.35)

But the citizen, the truly wise man, who has dedicated himself not to idle disputations but to the service of the commonwealth, from which that crowd who are called philosophers have distanced themselves further than anyone. . . .

nam quis philosophorum aut in iudiciis frequens aut clarus in conationibus fuit? quis denique in ipsa, quam maxime plerique praecipunt, rei publicae administratione uersatus est?

(Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 12.2.7)

For who of the philosophers has been either prominent in the courts or made his name in public assemblies? Finally who of them has involved himself in the service of the commonwealth, that very issue about which most of them love to give instruction?

Abstract argument (*disputationes*), the construction of ideal states and the quibble about how to define moral terms are all very well in their place, but those who spend their lives in such activities are of

⁵⁷ The bias against contemporary philosophers reflects that attributed by Cassius Dio to Mucianus (see above, n. 14); the use of the imperfect suggests that they have recently been expelled. This latter observation would be consistent with a publication date in the last year(s) of Domitian's reign (Kennedy [1969] 28).

little practical value.⁵⁸ It comes down in the end to that ongoing contrast between Greek and Roman articulated by Scipio in Cicero's *De Re Publica* (2.1.3) and Anchises in Virgil's *Aeneid* (6.846–53):

an fortitudinem, iustitiam, fidem, continentiam, frugalitatem, contemptum doloris ac mortis melius alii docebunt quam Fabricii, Curii, Reguli, Decii, Mucii alique innumerabiles? quantum enim Graeci praeceptis ualent, tantum Romani, quod est maius, exemplis.

(Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 12.2.30)

Will anyone else teach courage, justice, trustworthiness, self-control, frugality, and contempt for pain and death better than the Fabricii, the Curii, the Decii, the Mucii and innumerable others? For however many moral precepts the Greeks can put up, the Romans have as many examples of moral behaviour, which is a much greater thing.⁵⁹

With the exception of Musonius (the remains of whose discourses are preserved in Greek) and the shadowy Hostilianus, all the philosophers of this period emanate from the eastern half of the empire and bear Greek names: Demetrius, Diogenes, Heras, Epictetus, Artemidorus, Euphrates, Dio, Plutarch, Timocrates, Athenodotus, Apollonius, Archippus.⁶⁰ For people like these and their imitators Quintilian tends to employ the Greek term *philosophi*; for the true wisdom of the orator, however, it is the Latin *sapiens*: *sit igitur orator uir talis, qualis uere sapiens appellari possit* ('let the orator be the sort of man to whom the epithet "wise" can truly be applied', *Inst.* 1 *praef.* 18). To be a good orator, one must be a good person; to be a good person is to be wise. *Philosophia* can be (and is) feigned; you can't feign eloquence (12.3.12).

⁵⁸ 'There was little of practical reforming use in [the philosophers'] ideology': Southern (1997) 115.

⁵⁹ Rusticus and Senecio were thus adopting a 'Roman' approach by developing *exempla* of moral behaviour (Thrasyllus and Helvidius senior respectively), much as Tacitus was to do in the *Agricola*. The fact that these were the *exempla* they chose indicates flawed political (and so moral) perception; service to the state (*pietas*) is the proper Roman moral criterion, not subversion and self-immolation. The 'Stoic opposition' thus becomes a kind of state within a state, operating with a different and opposing set of moral values. The ultimate *exemplum* is the younger Cato, who models his own uncompromising conduct on Socrates; he spends his last hours in philosophical discussion, passionately defending the Stoic paradox that the virtuous man is free while the evil man is a slave, talking with the Greek philosophers Demetrius and Apollonides, and reading the *Phaedo* (see Plut. *Cat. Min.* 67–70—a cautionary tale according to Swain [1997] 187).

⁶⁰ Cf. Williams (1978) 145: 'Philosophy had . . . retreated into being a Greek dis-

From the safety of Nicopolis and another reign, Epictetus can draw on the Flavian era for observations about the appropriate response of the individual to the tyrant. In Helvidius senior's confrontation with Vespasian, Epictetus is fully on Helvidius' side, as we have seen;⁶¹ for this Greek Stoic, service to the individual's moral perception constitutes the criterion for approval, not service to the state. Many arguments are adduced to prove that the tyrant has no power over the individual; he can harm the body but not the mind (see, e.g., *Epict. Diss.* 1.19.7–10; 2.9.1–15, 60–3; 4.7.15–18). To be afraid of what Caesar can do to you is to show that you are a slave to the body (2.13.22–3).⁶² The assumption underlying these reflections is that Caesar (implication: tyrant Domitian) seeks to exercise control by threatening violence and death against the non-compliant; one can imagine this being the subject of many seminar discussions among Epictetus and his politician associates while Epictetus was still in Rome. Such discussions form the background of a discourse like 2.19, Πρὸς τοὺς μέχρι λόγου μόνον ἀναλαμβάνοντας τὰ τῶν φιλοσόφων ('Against Those Who Take Up the Doctrines of Philosophers Only as Conversation Topics'), where Epictetus attacks those whose idea of 'doing philosophy' is to engage in the pleasure of abstract argument rather than moral improvement. What do such people do when Caesar summons them to answer an accusation? They display their worthlessness by their abject self-pity and their inability to apply the precepts that they were bandying about in the seminar room to their current situation (2.19.17–19; cf. 4.1.132–43). This criticism of the divorce of philosophy from real life finds its parallel in Quintilian (*Inst.* 12.2.8), but the perspective is very different; for Quintilian it shows the irrelevance of philosophy as currently practised to practical statecraft, for Epictetus it demonstrates the hypocrisy of the individual. Similarly the observations on the perils of being an *amicus Caesaris* ('friend of Caesar') in *Dissertationes* 4.1, Περὶ ἐλευθερίας ('On Freedom'), show that the path to happiness is not political advancement but the control of the passions: τί γάρ ἐστιν, ὃ ζητεῖ πᾶς ἄνθρωπος; εὐσταθῆσαι, εὐδαιμονῆσαι, πάντα ὡς θέλει ποιεῖν, μὴ κωλύεσθαι,

cipline.' For philosophy as essentially unRoman, compare Tacitus' remark about Agricola's mother quoted above, p. 362, and Juv. *Sat.* 3.114–18.

⁶¹ See above, pp. 351–2.

⁶² Cf. Philostr. *VA* 7.1: οἶδα καὶ τὰς τυραννίδας, ὡς ἔστιν ἀρίστη βάσανος ἀνδρῶν φιλοσοφούντων ('I know that tyrannies are the best testing-grounds of philosophers.').

μη ἀναγκάζεσθαι ('What is it that every man seeks? To be secure, to be happy, to do whatever he wishes to do, not to be obstructed, not to be subject to compulsion', 4.1.46). The person who has become Caesar's friend has none of these things; constantly insecure, nervous, his whole life is dominated by the fear of doing something that will offend Caesar, which will cost him his life (4.1.43–50). Senators, even consular senators, are not free—if they rely on their political position to make that judgement; they are all slaves to Caesar, ὁ πάντων κύριος ('master of all', 4.1.12). Again we hear Stoic propaganda, directed now against the servile, time-serving senate; the atmosphere here very similar to that created by Tacitus in his account of the senate's behaviour at *Agricola* 45.1–2. Domitian as the expelled philosophers and propagandists for the subsequent regime portrayed him sought to rule by fear; Epictetus as a counter to this offers freedom from fear, even when one is faced by the tyrant's threats. The *pax Romana*, the moral justification for the existence of the empire and those who rule it, is nothing in comparison to the peace that philosophy can offer (*Epict. Diss.* 3.3.9–17).

The final two books of Philostratus' *Vita Apollonii* are devoted to the climactic confrontation between the philosopher and the tyrant. Before he goes into court Apollonius has a brief conversation with the clerk, who tells him that Domitian is to judge the case:

ἐμοὶ δέ, ἔφη, καὶ τῷ βασιλεῖ τίς ὁ δικάσων; δεῖξω γὰρ αὐτὸν φιλοσοφίαν ἀδικοῦντα.

καὶ τίς, εἶπε, βασιλεῖ φιλοσοφίας λόγος, κἂν ἀδικῶν ταύτην τύχη; ἀλλὰ φιλοσοφία πολὺς, ἔφη, βασιλέως, ἵν' ἐπιτηδείως ἄρχῃ.

(Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 8.2)

'But who will judge between me and the emperor?' he asked, 'since I am going to prove that he is wronging philosophy.'

'What concern does the emperor have with philosophy, even if he does happen to be wronging it?' he replied.

'Ah', said Apollonius, 'but philosophy has a great deal of concern with the emperor, to see that he rules in the right way.'

Philosophy may have a concern, but if the emperor is unreceptive and philosophers ineffective or marginalised, there is little it can do. There was in fact to be no fruitful dialogue between philosophy and the Flavian regime. At his meeting with Vespasian in Alexandria, Apollonius told the new emperor that kingship was something that could not be taught (*VA* 5.36); here, after Domitian had found him

not guilty of the charges brought against him, he refuses the emperor's instructions to stay and converse with him and instead magically transports himself to Puteoli. The Cynics made nuisances of themselves, the Epicureans withdrew,⁶³ and the Stoics, who actually had a position on kingship to advance, failed to make an impact. Outside the comfort zone of his philosophical coterie Musonius regularly lost his audiences, and the self-styled Stoic politicians histrionically impaled themselves on the rulers' swords instead of working constructively for the advancement of the *res publica*. Philosophers were out of touch with both the political and the intellectual climate of the time, and largely thanks to their own shortcomings were perceived as arrogant and irrelevant. As Quintilian was to observe (*Inst.* 12.2.9), what they needed were the rhetorical skills to communicate their ideas effectively; in effect, to become orators.

Dignatio Sapientiae Doctoribus: *Dio Chrysostom and Trajan's Chariot*

The new new regime did not lack those who delighted in highlighting contrasts with the previous one.⁶⁴ Philosophers are now free once more to practise their profession in the capital, and politicians can spend time with them without fear of reprisal.⁶⁵ Even the emperor's wife could publicly announce that she was an Epicurean.⁶⁶ Euphrates returned; Dio Chrysostom likewise. Dio had supported Vespasian in his attack on the philosophers, but for political reasons had been exiled from both Rome and his native Prusa early in Domitian's reign. His impoverished appearance while wandering in exile led those whom he met to assume he was a philosopher and ask his advice; as he represents it, this led him to think about moral issues

⁶³ Hints of Epicurean withdrawal in Statius' poetic descriptions of country estates/escapes: *Silv.* 1.3.90–4, 108–9; 2.2.113, 127–9 (echoing *Lucr.* 3.938), 140–1. Cf. André (1987) 43.

⁶⁴ *Tac. Agr.* 3, *Hist.* 1.1; *Plin. Pan.* 11.1, 20.1–4, 42.1–4, 47.1–2, 48–52, 53.3–5, 63.2–8, 82.1 (on the pervasiveness of this motif in *Pan.*, see Bartsch [1994] 148–62); *Dio Chrys. Or.* 1.12–14, 22, 44–7, 55, 66–84; 2.65–78 (with Jones [1978] 118–19).

⁶⁵ So Pliny can visit and discuss moral issues with Euphrates (*Ep.* 1.10); contrast his visit to Artemidorus in 93, which he represents as being fraught with danger (3.11.1–3).

⁶⁶ Syme (1958) 538 and n. 1; André (1987) 44.

(*Or.* 13.11–13) and thus become a philosopher almost by accident.⁶⁷ Having been cast in the role of Cynic due to his appearance, he composed several orations in which Diogenes features as his philosophical *persona*; in one of these he discourses at length about the miserable life lived by the tyrant, where Diogenes' words on the Great King are obviously meant to be read as Dio on Domitian (6.35–62).⁶⁸ On his return, he attempted to succeed where Musonius and Epictetus had failed and take on the role of the Roman Socrates, exhorting his listeners to value material possessions less, to practise the virtues of courage, justice and self-control, and to become masters of themselves as the necessary preliminary to exercising their role as masters of the rest of the world (13.31–7). Dio does not choose to tell us what the reaction of his hearers was; but in addition to lecturing the Romans at large, he also composed four orations on kingship for the edification of Trajan (1–4).⁶⁹ Philosophy at last appeared to be playing its proper role in advising the ruler how to rule—or rather it suited the new regime to have it thought that this was so. It is recorded that Trajan invited Dio to ride with him in his triumphal chariot, and said to him on several occasions, τί μὲν λέγεις, οὐκ οἶδα, φιλῶ δέ σε ὡς ἐμαυτόν, 'I don't know what you are talking about, but I love you as I love myself' (Philostr. *VS* 1.488).⁷⁰ In other words, 'I'm not interested in anything you're trying to tell me, but your presence here does wonders for my image.' Now that really is expelling the mind.

⁶⁷ On the self-imaging involved in Dio's 'conversion' to philosophy, see Moles (1978) 96–100.

⁶⁸ To claim as Dio was later to do (*Or.* 45.1, 50.8) that he fearlessly and openly challenged Domitian is certainly overstating the case. He is simply casting himself in the role of the philosopher opposing the tyrant, as scripted by Epictetus. In a similar vein we find Pliny rather pathetically begging Tacitus to write him into the *Historiae* as an associate of the opposition (*Ep.* 7.33). His own account of his visit to Artemidorus (*Ep.* 3.11) has the same end in view. On post-Domitianic 'memoirs' of personal bravery during the reign, cf. Southern (1997) 114; on the hypocrisy involved in Pliny's case, see Bartsch (1994) 167–9.

⁶⁹ On these 'kingship' orations, see *inter alios* Jones (1978) 115–21; Moles (1990) *passim*.

⁷⁰ On this anecdote and its meaning, see Schmitz (1996) 315–19; what Trajan is clearly *not* saying is that he doesn't understand Greek! Cf. Rawson (1989) 250.

14. PLUTARCH AND THE RETURN OF THE ARCHAIC

Phiroze Vasunia

But he also wonders about himself, that he is not able to learn to forget and that he always hangs on to the past.

(F. Nietzsche)¹

A theme repeats itself with such frequency in Plutarch's writings that the critic is obliged to present it here for analysis: the archaic Greek past. It is one of the most striking features of Plutarch's work and is often noted. The Greek past recurs in his literary output throughout the course of his career, from the earliest compositions to the essays of his maturity. Thus, ancient Greek *exempla* and models figure in such disparate works as *De Gloria Atheniensium* ('On the Glory of the Athenians'), *De Herodoti Malignitate* ('On the Malice of Herodotus') and *Coniugalia Praecepta* ('Advice on Marriage'), as well as in the Greek and Roman sections of the *De Vita Caesarum* ('On the Life of the Caesars'). But if the return to the past in Plutarch is widely attested in the literature, the particular nature of this strategy can be probed further. What are the contours of this specific obsession? What meaning does it assume in the cultural, political and social contexts of Plutarch's time? What anxieties does it betray about the position of Greek intellectuals within the Roman empire? In this chapter I would like to sketch out a response or a set of connected responses to these questions in relation to Plutarch's essays. My purpose is not to repeat the familiar refrain that Plutarch, like the writers of the Second Sophistic, was attempting to distort the Greek past because of the pressures of Roman rule in Greece. The Roman domination of Greece is, certainly, an important factor in a discussion of this theme. However, the object here is to show how Plutarch's work delineates the awkward truths of Roman colonisation and, at the same time, presents to his audience a way of being Greek that is sensitive to the inescapable presence of empire.

¹ German text in Colli and Montinari (1972) 244.

In the first place, to consider Plutarch's treatment of Greece is to acknowledge that the writer conceived of ancient Greece as a holistic cultural entity. Thus Plutarch and other Greek intellectuals of the age were attempting to create an archaic origin for themselves and their contemporaries and by forging this origin to create a purity and a unity on which they could draw. They often chose to set aside the diversity and variety of the Greek city-states or the specificity of discrete historical epochs and events in order to present the view of a homogeneous Greek past, based chiefly on the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. Plutarch conceptualised this past as being essential and authentic and, in many ways, closer to a core Hellenic spirit than anything that was current in his own day. The past constituted by this intellectual effort offered him the means to write about a common Greek inheritance and a history that would be available to all inhabitants of the Roman province of Achaea in his time. Plutarch, along with other Greek writers, was writing about an idealised, imagined community, one that fellow Hellenes could invoke at a time when Roman rule over Greece was being reaffirmed daily in every way. The imagined past was, to be sure, a compensation for the reality of the present situation when the Greek city-states were of little political consequence in the Mediterranean and were dependent on Rome for governance. Of this scenario, Ewen L. Bowie has said: 'The Greeks could make a counter-claim to an equally far-flung empire of culture. . . . To reassure themselves that Greece had a claim comparable to that of Rome, they began to dwell more and more, in their principal cultural activities, on the political greatness of the past.'²

But, secondly, the nature of this recourse to the past undercut the very attempts to claim it as an origin. The evocations of Greek history in Plutarch are such that the Greek present never follows on or from the past. It was not just that Athens, Delphi or Greece had fallen on hard times; in fact, aristocrats such as Plutarch lived in economically good circumstances under Roman rule. More originary than original, the past of classical Greece served as an anteriority rather than as a strict point of origin from which the Greeks had evolved, organically or continually, into their own day. The past lay

² Bowie (1974) 208–9; cf. Gabba (1982) 43–65; Anderson (1993) 101–32; Veyne (1999) 510–67.

behind the present, the past haunted the present, it even irrupted into the present, but there was no clear, unambiguous line leading from the classical past to the present. Moreover, the picture of a past whole and pure was suffused with loss, nostalgia and regret. But if Plutarch cultivated a longing for a lost Greece, then it has to be said that he perceived it as different from the land of his own time; in other words, the past was also alien and foreign. The instability of Plutarch's appeals to the past, the ambiguities and divisions within his narratives of past achievement, and the anxieties about current political impotence serve largely to point to the cracks in the holistic time of the archaic. It turns out, then, that there is a disjunctive relationship between the purity of origin, on the one hand, and the contemporary time, on the other.³

Rather than see this discrepancy as illegitimate, pernicious or heuristically limiting, I would like to take it as critically productive and to explore the insights it affords us concerning Greeks and Greek literature in the Roman empire. To represent the past as ruptured from the present and therefore as subject to recovery made it possible for Greek intellectuals to seize it and use it for their own ends, in this case, the revival of Greek literature. A people can reach back to fictions of unity in a variety of circumstances: when there are moments of national stress and crisis, for instance, or when boundaries of community are uncertain, or when the social fabric feels the wear and tear of irreconcilable demands, or when the needs of elites and non-elites come into conflict. In the case of Plutarch and the writers of the Second Sophistic, we see perhaps a connected reason. In the late first century, Greece was securely a part of the Roman empire, with no possibility of any real autonomy on the horizon. The evocation of the past was a crucial and enabling factor with regard to Greek literary production under the Romans; it not only provided a discursive background, but also facilitated the revival of Greek letters in an age of imperialism.

For its presentation of the past and its internal dissonance, an exemplary text is the piece entitled (in Greek) Πότερον Ἀθηναῖοι κατὰ πόλεμον ἢ κατὰ σοφίαν ἐνδοξότεροι ('Whether Military or Intellectual Exploits Have Brought Athens More Fame') or (in Latin)

³ See Bhabha (1994) 123–70 and Prakash (1997) 536–56 for helpful treatments of this question.

De Gloria Atheniensium ('On the Glory of the Athenians', *De Glor. Ath.* 345D–351B).⁴ One cannot get very far in Plutarch's essays, and even in the few works that are explicitly about Roman themes such as *De Fortuna Romanorum* ('On the Fortune of the Romans'), without encountering the early or classical Greek past in one form or another (*De Fort. Rom.* 316B–326C).⁵ As its title indicates, *De Gloria Atheniensium* takes the eminence of classical Athens directly as its chief theme. The piece is labelled variously by scholars as a public oration, a rhetorical exercise or a display speech, but the views expressed in it are nonetheless consistent with Plutarch's work in general. In the speech, as in his other compositions, Plutarch's examples, quotations, allusions, 'similes', antitheses and vocabulary, also all relate back to the earlier ages of Greece. The starting point is that the Athenians' exploits and deeds and not their words or written compositions, won the city its fame and success. Historians such as Thucydides can hold up a mirror to the exploits of men of action, Plutarch writes, but historians themselves are not responsible for the deeds and military successes that made the city great. Moreover, 'writers of fictional deeds are as inferior to writers of history as writers of historical accounts are to the actual performers of deeds' (καὶ τοσούτων τῶν ἱστορούντων οἱ πλάττοντες τὰς πράξεις ὑστεροῦσιν, ὅσον ἀπολείπονται τῶν πραττόντων οἱ λέγοντες, *De Glor. Ath.* 348B). So the tragic poets and orators, and painters too, do not contribute directly to the city's glory; they represent things that are distant from reality because of the media in which they work. But the generals and statesmen actually carry out actions that redound to the city's fame.

Perhaps the most vivid image in the speech ends in a list of classical Athenian victories and successes. In his discussion of the tragic poets, Plutarch imagines two choruses making their entrances from opposite sides: one is the chorus of poets and actors, who enter carrying masks, stage props and equipment; the other is the chorus of commanders, who bring regiments, naval contingents, and the spoils of war. According to the narrator, Athens rose to its heights of fame and pre-eminence because of the latter group, consisting of the mil-

⁴ Translations of this essay are modified from Waterfield (1992).

⁵ Only one Latin author is quoted in the essay, namely, Livy. The other sources are Ion of Chios, Plato, Democritus, Homer, Aeschylus, Pindar, Alcman, Sophocles, Menander, Timotheus and Polybius. Plutarch also makes many allusions to Greek literature without referring to specific authors by name in the essay.

itary commanders and men of action, and not because of 'Euripides' craftsmanship, Sophocles' eloquence, and Aeschylus' command of words' (ἡ Εὐριπίδου σοφία καὶ ἡ Σοφοκλέους λογιότης καὶ τὸ Αἰσχύλου στόμα, *De Glor. Ath.* 348D). The prizes earned by the men of action are real, significant and politically important: ὧν νίκας ὄρᾱν μοι δοκῶ προσερχομένας, οὐ βοῦν ἔπαθλον ἐλκούσας ἢ τράγον, οὐδ' ἀνεστεμμένας κιττῷ καὶ Διονυσιακῆς τρυγὸς ὁδωδυίας· ἀλλ' ὅλαι μὲν πόλεις αὐτῶν εἰσι καὶ νῆσοι καὶ ἡπειροὶ, καὶ ναοὶ χιλιοτάλαντοι καὶ δήμων ἀποικισμοὶ μυρίαῖνδροι, τροπαίους δὲ παντοδαποῖς ἀναστέφονται καὶ λαφύροις ('I seem to see their victories approaching and the prizes these victories bring in their train are not cows or goats; nor is ivy their garland or Dionysian dregs their scent. They bring whole cities, islands, countries, priceless temples and colonies populated by countless people; and their garlands are trophies and plunder of every description', 349C–D). These signs of victory can be described in detail, furthermore, and they include the Parthenon, the South Wall, the docks, the Propylaea, the Chersonese, Amphipolis. Marathon is a part of Miltiades' victory, Salamis a part of Themistocles' defeat of the Persians. And the speaker continues: φέρει δ' ἡ μὲν Κίμωνος τριήρεις ἑκατὸν Φοινίσσας ἀπ' Εὐρυμέδοντος, ἡ δὲ Δημοσθένους καὶ Κλέωνος ἀπὸ Σφακτηρίας τὴν βρασίδου ἀσπίδ' αἰχμάλωτον καὶ δεδεμένους Σπαρτιάτας. τειχίζει δὲ τὴν πόλιν ἡ Κόνωνος, ἡ δὲ Θρασυβούλου κατὰγει τὸν δῆμον ἀπὸ Φυλῆς ἐλεύθερον, αἱ δ' Ἀλκιβιάδου περὶ Σικελίαν ὀλισθοῦσαν τὴν πόλιν ἐγείρουσιν ('Cimon's victory brings a hundred Phoenician warships from the Eurymedon, Demosthenes' and Cleon's brings from Sphacteria Brasidas' captured shield and prisoners-of-war, Conon's strengthens the city's defences, Thrasybulus' leads the people from Phyle to freedom, Alcibiades' victories resuscitate the city from its Sicilian lapse', 349D–E). Lastly, the speaker says: ἐκ δὲ τῶν Νεῖλεω καὶ Ἀνδρόκλου περὶ Λυδίαν καὶ Καρίαν ἀγώνων Ἰωνίαν ἀνισταμένην ἐπέιδεν ἡ Ἑλλάς ('It was as a result of Neileus' and Androclus' battles in Lydia and Caria that Greece appreciated Ionia's potential', 349E). Concerning this sequence of names, it is worth noting with modern commentators that the items mentioned, with the exception of Neileus' and Androclus' battles, are restricted to defining moments in the history of the city in the fifth century BCE and are mainly connected with the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian Wars, which occurred about five hundred years before Plutarch's time.

Plutarch's fixation with the classical age continues when he comes to a discussion of Isocrates. The orator had turned into an old man

who was unable to face death with equanimity. Instead of practising the arts of war or fighting with the army or navy, Isocrates had spent his time cultivating his literary style and techniques: πῶς οὖν οὐκ ἔμμελλεν ἄνθρωπος ψόφον ὅπλων φοβεῖσθαι καὶ σύρρηγμα φάλλαγος ὁ φοβούμενος φωνήεν φωνήεντι συγκροῦσαι καὶ συλλαβῇ τὸ ισόκωλον ἐνδεὲς ἐξενεγκεῖν; ('How could anyone not be afraid of the crashing of arms and the clash of regiments in battle, when he is afraid of letting vowel encounter vowel and of producing clauses whose equivalence is a syllable short?', 350E). Moreover, the orator took twelve years to compose a single work, his *Panegyricus*. So 'while Timotheus was liberating Euboea, Chabrias was fighting sea battles around Naxos, Iphicrates was massacring the Spartan contingent, and the Athenian people—now that they had liberated all Greece—gave everyone the same voting rights as themselves, Isocrates was sitting at home using words to reshape a book and taking the same time about it that Pericles took to construct the Propylaea and his vast edifices' (ἀλλ' ἐν ᾧ Τιμόθεος Εὐβοίαν ἡλευθέρου καὶ Χαβρίας περὶ Νάξου ἐναυμάχει καὶ περὶ Λέχαιον Ἴφικράτης κατέκοπτε τὴν Λακεδαιμονίων μόραν, καὶ πᾶσαν ἐλευθερώσας πόλιν ὁ δῆμος | ισόψηφον αὐτοῖς τὴν Ἑλλάδα κατέστησεν, οἴκοι καθήστο βιβλίον ἀναπλάττων τοῖς ὀνόμασιν, ὅσῳ χρόνῳ τὰ προπύλαια Περικλῆς ἀνέστησε καὶ τοὺς ἑκατομπέδους, 350F–351A). Here let us remark that Plutarch is taking a certain license with history since the events described in fact took place over more than twelve years, though still in the early fourth century BCE, and only Iphicrates' attack on the Spartan soldiers probably occurred during the period while Isocrates was labouring over his speech. Incidentally, Plutarch's comments about Isocrates' commitment to style and technique find an ironic echo in his own readers, since Plutarch himself took care to avoid hiatus and paid a great deal of attention to prose rhythm. At any rate, however, Plutarch is still firmly situating his examples in the Athens of the fifth and fourth century BCE.

De Gloria Atheniensium emphasises how the past of the city has been lost many generations ago, although it ostensibly deals with the dispute between men of letters and men of action. Plutarch's focus is on the Athens of the fifth and fourth centuries, the Athens of Miltiades, Pericles, Isocrates and Demosthenes, not the Athens of his day or even of a hundred years ago. It was, he says, an era forged by the great statesmen and evoked by Greek intellectuals such as Pindar and Herodotus, and Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. But this is

clearly not the Athens of the Roman empire when no comparable figures exist; in fact, Roman Athens seems to bear very little relation to classical Athens and there are no longer even the socio-political circumstances and pressures that led men such as Themistocles and Pericles to raise the stature of the city. It is very difficult to see from Plutarch's description in *De Gloria Atheniensium*, and in his other works as well, how the classical city relates to its counterpart of the Roman era or even to see how the earlier city might have evolved into the later one.⁶ In truth, there is little or no organic connection to be found in Plutarch's writings between the two cities.

But if the classical Athenian city is lost to the past, then it can nonetheless be recovered and appropriated in the present, and this is precisely what Plutarch is attempting through his written work. The classical city is said to have reached a certain height in fifth and fourth century Athens, before the battle at Chaeronea, and then it soon decayed and stagnated. At some point thereafter, a temporal rupture or break occurs between the classical and the Roman cities, a break that marks off the earlier time as lost or absent. When the earlier city is conceptualised thus, however, the recuperation of the lost past can be attempted. It is through this mechanism that Plutarch seeks to support the reinscription of the classical past in his own literary works. And it will be evident, of course, that the treatment of Athens in *De Gloria Atheniensium* is symptomatic of the general treatment of Greece in Plutarch's texts. The voluminous citations and the incorporations of examples from the classical Greek period in Plutarch's corpus are part of this restorative project; they constitute a deliberate effort on the part of the writer to recover the past of Achaea and to literalise it in his writings. Hence, the references to classical history and the quotations from the Greek authors that occur throughout Plutarch are not solely ornamental or pedantic and not just intended to lend authority or vividness to the text. They belong to a frame of reference, carefully constructed and exquisitely deployed, through which he achieves the return and the re-emergence of the lost Greece.

These evocations of loss, whether implicit or explicit, are sufficiently widespread in Plutarch's work to be considered definitive and may be explored further briefly. There are places in his work when the

⁶ See Ando (2000) 131–2.

author gives a seemingly unambiguous account of the current political and cultural impotence of Greece. For example, in the dialogue *De Defectu Oraculorum* ('On the Decline of Oracles'), which is set in Delphi in 83/84 CE, the interlocutors discuss why oracles now utter fewer prophecies and are less important than in the classical era (*De Def. Or.* 409E–438E).⁷ Ammonius, a teacher of Plutarch and a philosopher, links the insignificance of the oracle to the depopulation of the region:

τοῦ δὲ μετρίου καὶ ἱκανοῦ καὶ μηδαμῇ περιττοῦ πανταχῇ δ' αὐτάρκους, μάλιστα τοῖς θεοῖς πρέποντος ἔργοις, εἰ ταύτην ἀρχὴν λαβὼν φαίη τις ὅτι τῆς κοινῆς ὀλιγανδρίας, ἣν αἱ πρότεραι στάσεις καὶ οἱ πόλεμοι περὶ πᾶσαν ὁμοῦ τι τὴν οἰκουμένην ἀπειργάσαντο, πλείστον μέρος ἡ Ἑλλάς μετέσχηκε, καὶ μόλις ἂν νῦν ὅλη παράσχοι τρισχιλίους ὀπλίτας, ὅσους ἡ Μεγαρέων μία πόλις ἐξέπεμψεν εἰς Πλαταιάς (οὐδὲν οὖν ἕτερον ἦν τὸ πολλὰ καταλιπεῖν χρηστήρια τὸν θεὸν ἢ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἐλέγχειν τὴν ἐρημίαν), ἀκριβὲς ἂν οὕτω παράσχοι τι τῆς εὐρησιλογίας. τίνος γὰρ ἦν ἀγαθόν, ἐν Τεγύραις ὡς πρότερον εἶναι μαντεῖον, ἢ περὶ τὸ Πτῶον ὅπου μέρος ἡμέρας ἐντυχεῖν ἔστιν ἀνθρώπων νέμοντι; καὶ γὰρ τοῦτο δὴ τοῦνταῦθα πρεσβύτατον ὃν χρόνον τε καὶ δόξῃ κλεινότατον ὑπὸ θηρίου χαλεποῦ δρακαίνης πολλὸν χρόνον ἔρημον γενέσθαι καὶ ἀπροσπέλαστον ἱστοροῦσιν, οὐκ ὀρθῶς τὴν ἀργίαν ἀλλ' ἀνάπαλιν λαμβάνοντες· ἡ γὰρ ἐρημία τὸ θηρίον ἐπηγάγετο μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ θηρίον ἐποίησε τὴν ἐρημίαν. ἐπεὶ δὲ τῷ θεῷ δόξαν οὕτως ἢ θ' Ἑλλάς ἐρρώσθη πόλεσι καὶ τὸ χωρίον ἀνθρώποις ἐπλήθυσε, δυσὶν ἐχρῶντο προφήτῃσιν ἐν μέρει καθιεμέναις, καὶ τρίτῃ δ' ἔφεδρος ἦν ἀποδοδειγμένη. νῦν δ' ἔστι μία προφήτις, καὶ οὐκ ἐγκαλοῦμεν· ἐξαρκεῖ γὰρ αὕτη τοῖς δεομένοις. οὐ τοίνυν αἰτιατέον οὐδὲν τὸν θεόν· ἡ γὰρ οὕσα μαντικὴ καὶ διαμένουσα πᾶσιν ἐστὶν ἱκανὴ καὶ πάντα ἀποπέμπει τυγχάνοντας ὧν χρῆζουσιν. ὥσπερ οὖν ἐννέα κήρυξιν ὁ Ἀγαμέμνων ἐχρῆτο, καὶ μόλις κατέιχε τὴν ἐκκλησίαν διὰ πλῆθος, ἐνταῦθα δ' ὅψεσθε μεθ' ἡμέρας ὀλίγας ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ μίαν φωνὴν ἐξικνουμένην εἰς πάντας· οὕτω τότε πλείοσιν ἐχρῆτο φωναῖς πρὸς πλείονας ἢ μαντικὴ, νῦν δὲ τοῦναντίον ἔδει θαυμάζειν τὸν θεόν, εἰ περιώρα τὴν μαντικὴν ἀχρήστως δίκην, ὕδατος ἀπορρέουσας ἢ καθάπερ αἱ πέτραι ποιμένων ἐν ἐρημίᾳ καὶ βοσκημάτων φωναῖς ἀντηχοῦσαν.

(Plutarch, *De Defectu Oraculorum* 413F–414C)

Moderation, adequacy, and an economical completeness of provision are the proper characteristics of the work of god. On this principle, one could argue that Greece has suffered particularly badly from the common depopulation due to the disorders and wars that have affected practically the whole inhabited world. She could now scarcely raise the 3,000 hoplites that the single city of Megara sent to Plataea. The

⁷ Translations of this essay are modified from Russell (1993).

only reason, then, for the god's abandoning many of the oracles would be to demonstrate the depopulation of Greece. I would give such an argument full marks for ingenuity. For to whose benefit would it be that there should be an oracle at Tegyrae as there once was, or at Ptoion, where it is a day's portion to meet one man keeping his flock? Even our oracle here, the oldest and most famous, is said to have lain deserted and unvisited for a long time because of the terrible dragon. But this explanation is the reverse of the truth: it was the desert that produced the dragon, not the dragon that produced the desert. And when, god having so decided, Greece grew strong in her cities and the area became populous, they employed two prophetesses who took turns on the tripod, with a third designated to wait in reserve. Now, however, there is only one; and we do not complain, for she suffices for the inquirers. There is nothing in this to make us blame Apollo: the power of prophecy that exists and persists is adequate for all and sends every inquirer away satisfied. Agamemnon employed nine heralds and could scarce keep the assembly in order because it was so numerous; here, in the theatre, in a few days' time, you will see that a single voice reaches everybody. So with prophecy: in the old days, it employed more voices to reach more people; now, on the other hand, we should have good reason to be surprised at Apollo, if he let his prophecy run away like water to no purpose or echo like the rocks to the cries of shepherds and flocks in the wilderness.

The depopulation of Greece was mentioned earlier, famously by Polybius (36.17.5–9), and then again by other Latin writers such as Cicero (*Flac.* 16.62–4), Horace (*Epist.* 2.2.81–6) and Ovid (*Met.* 15.430). Seneca pointed out that the foundations of the great cities had crumbled away leaving no trace of their existence (*Ep.* 14.3[91].10). And Dio Chrysostom of Prusa, who was Plutarch's contemporary and was exiled by Domitian, also remarked on the desolation of Greece: οὐχ ὁ Πηνειὸς δι' ἐρήμου ῥεῖ Θετταλίας; οὐχ ὁ Λάδων διὰ τῆς Ἀρκαδίας ἀναστάτου γενομένης; ('Does not the Peneus flow through a Thessaly that is desolate? Does not the Ladon flow through an Arcadia whose people have been driven from their homes?', *Or.* 33.25).⁸ Plutarch's passage delineates the theme of depopulation in regard to the oracle at Delphi, and earlier in the dialogue oracles in general are said to be dim, enfeebled or fading in fame and importance. But the passage also speaks to broader issues of desolation, decline and decay

⁸ Alcock (1993) 24–32 suggests that the depopulation of Greece mentioned in the literary sources does not fully correspond to the archaeological and inscriptional record.

that are already explicit in the dialogue's title, so that the waning of oracles stands in metonymically for the decline of Greece. In the classical period, the oracle needed three priestesses to function smoothly, Greece was strong in its cities, and Megara could dispatch 3,000 hoplites to fight at Plataea. But now, in Plutarch's time, one priest suffices, Greece is no longer strong in its cities, and it would not be able to participate in conflicts similar to the great battles of the past. The wilderness in which the cries of flocks and shepherds echo, therefore, is the apt parallel to Greece in its present state.

The desolation of Greece and the longing for its past glories should not be taken to imply that, for Plutarch, Greece itself is in a state of discontent or unrest. In another dialogue set in Delphi, *De Pythiae Oraculis* ('On the Pythian Oracles'), the discussants consider why the priestess at Delphi no longer gives her responses in hexameter verse (394D–409D).⁹ Theon notes that the oracle's practice has changed because the times have changed: πολλή γὰρ εἰρήνη καὶ ἡσυχία, πέπανται δὲ πόλεμος, καὶ πλάναι καὶ στάσεις οὐκ εἰσὶν οὐδὲ τυραννίδες οὐδ' ἄλλα νοσήματα καὶ κακὰ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὥσπερ πολυφαρμάκων δυνάμεων χρήζοντα καὶ περιττῶν. ὅπου δὲ ποικίλον οὐδὲν οὐδ' ἀπόρητον οὐδὲ δεινόν . . . ('All is peace and quiet, war has ceased, there are no migrations or revolutions or tyrannies in Greece, or any other disorders and evils demanding complicated medication, as it were. There are no complexities, no secrets, no dangers . . .', 408B–C).¹⁰ So Theon himself is very content with the questions that people now put to the god, whether they deal with marriage, sea voyages or personal finance. These are everyday questions because the times are peaceful: τὰ δὲ μέγιστα πόλεων μαντεύματα φορᾶς καρπῶν πέρι καὶ βοτῶν ἐπιγονῆς καὶ σωμάτων ὑγείας ('The gravest questions needed by cities relate to harvests or the increase of cattle or the health of the population', 408C). Even the most serious questions put to the oracle are not of world-historical importance, Theon says, for the current circumstances do not lend themselves to crises or earth-shaking events. In this dialogue, thus, Plutarch places the transformation or passing of an ancient custom in the broader context of social and political tranquillity.

⁹ Translations of this essay are modified from Russell (1993).

¹⁰ There are similar passages in *Prae. Ger. Reip.* 824C; *De Tranq. Anim.* 469E; *An Seni* 784F.

But if contemporary Greece enjoys peace and does not suffer the wars and *stasis* of earlier times, according to Plutarch, this situation needs to be actively maintained and prolonged. The masses need to be guided, persuaded or bullied so that the current prosperity and stability not be disturbed. A final text by Plutarch to be considered here and often quoted in discussions of Greek attitudes to Roman rule reworks this theme with a bravura flair and in connection with the classical past; it was perhaps written after the Flavian period, though the dating of all of Plutarch's works is uncertain.¹¹ In *Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae* ('Rules for Politicians'), addressed to Menemachus of Sardis, Plutarch considers the political problems of his own day and the situation of provincial Greek cities under Roman rule (798A–825F).¹² Ostensibly given to the rules and prescriptions that a Greek should follow during the period of Roman rule, Plutarch's essay also touches on the issues that we have been considering. Part of the text is consistent with the views espoused in the works on the Delphic oracles. These are days, Plutarch indicates, 'when the state of our cities requires no leadership in war, no deposition of tyrants, no formation of alliances' (νῦν οὖν ὅτε τὰ πράγματα τῶν πόλεων οὐκ ἔχει πολέμων ἡγεμονίας οὐδὲ τυραννίδων καταλύσεις οὐδὲ συμμαχικὰς πράξεις, 805A). But Plutarch also dispenses advice that seems to run counter to his own mania for the Greek past. In a notorious passage, worth quoting at some length, he writes:

εἰσιόντα δ' εἰς ἅπασαν ἀρχὴν οὐ μόνον ἐκείνους δεῖ προχειρίζεσθαι τοὺς λογισμούς, οἷς ὁ Περικλῆς αὐτὸν ὑπεμίμησεν ἀναλαμβάνων τὴν χλαμύδα 'πρόσεχε, Περικλείης· ἐλευθέρων ἄρξεις, Ἑλλήνων ἄρξεις, πολιτῶν Ἀθηναίων·' ἀλλὰ κάκεινο λέγειν πρὸς ἑαυτὸν 'ἀρχόμενος ἄρξεις, ὑποτεταγμένης πόλεως ἀνθυπάτοις, ἐπιτρόποις Καίσαρος· 'οὐ ταῦτα λόγῃ πεδιάς', οὐδ' αἱ παλαιαὶ Σάρδεις οὐδ' ἡ Λυδῶν ἐκείνη δύναμις·' εὐασταλεστέραν δεῖ τὴν χλαμύδα ποιεῖν, καὶ βλέπειν ἀπὸ τοῦ στρατηγίου πρὸς τὸ βῆμα, καὶ τῷ στεφάνῳ μὴ πολλὴ φρονεῖν μηδὲ πιστεύειν, ὀρῶντα τοὺς καλτίους ἐπάνω τῆς κεφαλῆς.

(Plutarch, *Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae* 813D–E)

When you enter into any office, you must, of course, bring to the front of your mind the thoughts of which Pericles reminded himself whenever he put on his general's cloak: 'Be careful, Pericles: you are in command of free men, of Greeks, of your fellow Athenians'. But

¹¹ For one attempt at a chronology, see Jones (1966).

¹² Translations of this essay are modified from Russell (1993).

there is another thing too which you must say to yourself: 'You are in command, but you are under command; you rule a city subject to proconsuls, to Caesar's procurators. There are no "lances of the plains", this is not ancient Sardis or the historic power of Lydia.' Make your cloak more modest, look at the orator's platform from the standpoint of the governor's office, don't attach much pride to your crown or trust in it: you can see his boots above your head!

After a few remarks about actors, he continues with words that have disturbed some commentators because of their implications:

οἱ δ' ἄρχοντες ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν ἀνοήτως τὰ τῶν προγόνων ἔργα καὶ φρονήματα καὶ πράξεις ἀσυμμέτρους τοῖς παροῦσι καιροῖς καὶ πράγμασιν οὔσας μιμεῖσθαι κελεύοντες ἐξαίρουσι τὰ πλήθη, γελοῖα τε ποιοῦντες οὐκέτι γέλωτος ἄξια πάσχουσιν, ἂν μὴ πάνυ καταφρονηθῶσι. πολλὰ γὰρ ἔστιν ἄλλα τῶν πρότερον Ἑλλήνων διεξιόντα τοῖς νῦν ἡθοποιεῖν καὶ σωφρονίζειν, ὥς Ἀθήνησιν ὑπομνήσκοντα μὴ τῶν πολεμικῶν, ἀλλ' οἷόν ἐστι τὸ ψήφισμα τὸ τῆς ἀμνηστίας ἐπὶ τοῖς τριάκοντα· καὶ τὸ ζημιῶσαι Φρύνιχον τραγωδίαν διδάξαντα τὴν Μιλήτου ἄλωσιν· καὶ ὅτι Θήβας Κασάνδρου κτίζοντος ἔστεφανήθησαν, τὸν δ' ἐν Ἀργεὶ πυθόμενοι σκυταλισμόν, ἐν ᾧ πεντακοσίους καὶ χιλίους ἀνῆρῆκεσαν ἐξ αὐτῶν οἱ Ἀργεῖοι, περινεγκεῖν καθάρσιον περὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἐκέλευσαν· ἐν δὲ τοῖς Ἀρπαλείοις τὰς οἰκίας ἐρευνῶντες μόνην τὴν τοῦ γεγαμηκότος νεωστὶ παρήλθον. ταῦτα γὰρ καὶ νῦν ἔξεστι ζηλοῦντας ἐξομοιοῦσθαι τοῖς προγόνοις· τὸν δὲ Μαραθῶνα καὶ τὸν Εὐρυμέδοντα καὶ τὰς Πλαταιάς, καὶ ὅσα τῶν παραδειγμάτων οἰδεῖν ποιεῖ καὶ φρυάττεσθαι διακενῆς τοὺς πολλούς, ἀπολιπόντας ἐν ταῖς σχολαῖς τῶν σοφιστῶν.

(Plutarch, *Præcepta Gerendae Reipublicae* 814A–C)

Now there are magistrates in our cities foolish enough to recommend the people to imitate the deeds and spirit and actions of their forefathers, which are quite out of proportion to their present times and circumstances. They rouse the mob like this; but their ridiculous performance has consequences for them which are not at all ridiculous, unless they are lucky enough to be completely despised. There are plenty of episodes in the history of the ancient Greeks that can be told in order to form the character and control the passions of the men of our own day. At Athens it is not the history of wars that is now needed, but, for example, the vote of amnesty following the usurpation of the Thirty, or the fine imposed on Phrynichus for producing a tragedy about the capture of Miletus, or the story that the citizens wore garlands to celebrate Cassander's founding Thebes, but ordered a purification of the Assembly on receipt of the news of the 'clubbing' at Argos, in which the Argives massacred 1,500 of their own people. Or again, one might recall that, when they were searching houses at the time of the Harpalus scandal, they deliberately passed over the house of the newly married couple. These are ways in which we can

still imitate our ancestors today. But Marathon and Eurymedon and Plataea and all the historical instances that make the masses swell with false pride and flaunt themselves about nothing are best left behind in the sophists' classrooms.

Plutarch's elitism is certainly noticeable in *Praeceptae Gerendae Reipublicae*, but it should be said that he never disavows his class or cultural milieu, that is, the Greek aristocracy.¹³ What is remarkable in these passages is the presentation of Greek history and not just the expressed caution against rabble rousing and the false pride that such an activity causes.¹⁴ The provincial Greek office-holder is reminded that he is no longer in ancient Greece but is subordinate to a higher power, whether Roman proconsul or procurator; but he is reminded of this status in the context of references to Pericles and to the lances of Sophocles' *Trachiniae* (1058), that is, references to a time when classical Athens was free and militarily powerful. Further, Plutarch advises the politician not to use inappropriate episodes from Greek history and not to refer to the history of wars, but to use only examples that are suitable and proportionally important. Marathon, Eurymedon, Plataea, these are not to be mentioned.¹⁵ But again, these places refer to battles when free Greeks confronted foreign invaders, in this case, the Persians, and ensured the independence of Greece for the next several generations. The inference to draw from these dispensations is that Plutarch is marking a clear line between the classical past and the current situation in Greece. The great days of the Persian Wars and Periclean Athens are lost forever. They bear little relevance to the Achaean masses who live and work under Roman imperial jurisdiction. By implication, the use of exempla from the classical Greek past is open only to one group, namely, the Greek cultural elite, of whom Plutarch is an eloquent representative.

¹³ See Jones (1971) 39–47.

¹⁴ See Swain (1996) 167–8.

¹⁵ In the *Flaminius* Plutarch implies that the worthwhile battles of the Greeks were in the past: Marathon, Eurymedon, Plataea, Salamis, Thermopylae and Cyprus (11.6). These are some of the same battles as those mentioned in *Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae*, where he says the Greek politician should be wary of mentioning them to the masses. Flaminius himself is praised by Plutarch for justly earning the gratitude of the people he freed (*Flam.* 10–12), but ultimately it is Philopoemen, with whom he is paired, who is the greater benefactor of the Greeks. See Swain (1996) 145–50.

The true enemies of the Roman order, Ramsay MacMullen suggested some years ago, were the members of the Greek upper classes, who were defending their cultural heritage.¹⁶ Plutarch certainly manifests an *anxiety* about Greek culture in relation to Roman rule even if it is difficult to maintain that he was an enemy of the imperial power, and this anxiety is apparent where such issues as cultural identity and the Greek past are concerned. In my view, the engagement with the past that occurs in Plutarch and the Second Sophistic is part of an attempt to forge a Greek cultural identity under the conditions of Roman colonisation.¹⁷ An interest in the past was already an obsession among the fourth-century Greek orators and was also prevalent in historiographers of the Hellenistic period; it was nurtured in the schools of grammar and rhetoric; and it is also apparent in several Roman writers.¹⁸ But what was true of Plutarch and the other Greeks of the empire was the importance placed on the fifth and fourth centuries BCE and especially on Athens.¹⁹ Such an emphasis, though not necessarily at odds with Roman rule, was a response to the political certainties of empire and foreign control. It involved the retrospective creation of a certain kind of history and then its recuperation in the present by Greek aristocrats and cultured elites. Certainly, there was a rebirth of Greek letters in the second half of the first century. 'For three centuries before the age of Plutarch', R. H. Barrow wrote, only half exaggerating, 'Greece produced in no field of literature any notable work which has survived, and, what is more, we do not hear that any such work was written. Plutarch himself is the sole exception'.²⁰ There were such figures as Diodorus of Sicily, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Strabo, but they were not from Greece, whereas Plutarch was from Chaeronea, in Boeotia, where he chose to stay 'so that it might not become smaller' (ὥνα μὴ μικροτέρα γένηται, *Plut. Dem.* 2.2).²¹ The first Greek

¹⁶ MacMullen (1966); but cf. Jones (1971) 126; Veyne (1999) 566; Ando (2000).

¹⁷ I do not mean to suggest that Plutarch and the sophists shared identical attitudes toward Rome or the Greek past; clearly, there were important differences among these writers: see Anderson (1993) and Swain (1996).

¹⁸ For Roman writers, see, e.g., Cic. *Fam.* 4.5.4; Plin. *Ep.* 8.24.1–4 for interest in Greece; cf. Tac. *Dial.* for interest mainly but not exclusively in Rome.

¹⁹ Jones (1971) 120–1; Bowie (1974); Anderson (1993) 101–32; Veyne (1999) 536–41. For Plutarch's hostility toward Hellenistic kings, see Jones (1971) 124.

²⁰ Barrow (1967) 10.

²¹ The list of writers from outside of Greece who wrote in Greek includes Diodorus of Sicily, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Strabo, Philo, Josephus, Dio Chrysostom,

renaissance begins in the age of Plutarch perhaps with Plutarch; he is surely one of its motivating forces, if not its central figure.

This Greek cultural identity was not so much a repudiation of Latin learning as a new way of being Greek in a colonial scenario.²² Plutarch, it is true, does warn the Greeks of the upper classes against integration with the Romans.²³ On his own admission, he came late to Latin;²⁴ and it is also the case that he never refers to the philosophical works of Lucretius, Cicero or Seneca. No contemporary Roman author mentions Plutarch, either. However, Plutarch does not explicitly reject Latin culture and may well have been a Roman citizen by the time of his old age, if an inscription from Delphi has been correctly interpreted.²⁵ Nor does he explicitly favour Greeks at

Aristides and Pausanias. Epictetus' work survives only because of Arrian, who was from Bithynia and then moved to Rome. However, Paul's Letters to the Romans and Thessalonians, if they were written in Greece, may be the exception to this generalisation. See further Barrow (1967) 10–11.

²² Boulogne (1994).

²³ See *De Exil.* 605B–C and *De Tranq. Anim.* 470C with remarks in *Prae. Ger. Reip.* In his essay *De Fortuna Alexandri* ('On the Fortune of Alexander'), Plutarch recognises that Alexander's goal was the unity of humankind but he does not suggest that the Roman empire has achieved the goal. See also Barrow (1967) 144; Jones (1971) 116; Gabba (1982) 63; Ando (2000) 47–8, 341–2.

²⁴ *Dem.* 2.2: ἡμεῖς δὲ μικρὰν μὲν οἰκοῦντες πόλιν, καὶ ἵνα μὴ μικροτέρα γένηται φιλοχωροῦντες, ἐν δὲ Ῥώμῃ καὶ ταῖς περὶ τὴν Ἰταλίαν διατριβαῖς οὐ σχολῆς οὔσης γυμνάζεσθαι περὶ τὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν διάλεκτον ὑπὸ χρεῖων πολιτικῶν καὶ τῶν διὰ φιλοσοφίαν πλησιαζόντων, ὥς ποτε καὶ πόρρω τῆς ἡλικίας ἠρξάμεθα Ῥωμαικοῖς συντάγμασιν ἐντυγχάνειν, καὶ πρῶγμα θαυμαστὸν μὲν, ἀλλ' ἀληθὲς ἐπάσχομεν. οὐ γὰρ οὕτως ἐκ τῶν ὀνομάτων τὰ πράγματα συνιέναι καὶ γνωρίζειν συνέβαινεν ἡμῖν, ὡς ἐκ τῶν πραγμάτων, <ὧν> ἀμὼς γέ πως εἶχομεν ἐμπειρίαν, ἐπακολουθεῖν δι' αὐτὰ καὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασι. κάλλους δὲ Ῥωμαϊκῆς ἀπαγγελίας καὶ τάχους αἰσθάνεσθαι καὶ μεταφορὰς ὀνομάτων καὶ ἁρμονίας καὶ τῶν ἄλλων, οἷς ὁ λόγος ἀγάλλεται, χαρίεν μὲν ἡγούμεθα καὶ οὐκ ἀτερπές· ἡ δὲ πρὸς τοῦτο μελέτη καὶ ἄσκησις οὐκ εὐχερής, ἀλλ' οἷστίσι πλείων τε σχολὴ καὶ τὰ τῆς ὥρας ἔτι [πρὸς] τὰς τοιαύτας ἐπιχωρεῖ φιλοτιμίας ('I live in a small town, where I am glad to stay, so that it might not become smaller; and when I was in Rome and other parts of Italy, I did not have the leisure to gain practice in the Latin language because of the public business that I had undertaken and the number of people who thronged to be taught philosophy. It was late, therefore, when I was well into middle age, that I began to read the Latin authors. My experience may seem strange but it is nonetheless true. I did not gain the knowledge of things through the words, rather I was able somehow or other as a result of my experience of things to follow the words. The beauty of Latin narrative and its speed, the figures and harmony and the rest in which the language takes pleasure, we do think elegant and agreeable. But the practice and application required to this end are no easy matters; it is for those who have more leisure than I, as well as the gifts of youth, to satisfy such ambitions.')

²⁵ SIG 829 (on the base of a statue of Hadrian at Delphi): Αὐτοκράτορα Καίσαρα, θεοῦ Τραιανοῦ Παρθικοῦ υἱόν, θεοῦ Νέρβα υἱόν, Τραιανὸν Ἀδριανὸν Σεβαστόν, τὸ κοινὸν τῶν Ἀμφικτυόνων, ἐπιμελετεύοντος ἀπὸ Δελφῶν Μεστρίου Πλουτάρχου

times when he easily might have done so, for instance, in the comparisons to *De Vita Caesarum*. The format itself of *De Vita Caesarum* implies some level of separate equality between Greek and Roman. Nevertheless, he does uphold Greek identity in the face of the dominant culture. The way for him to accomplish this was to memorialise the past and to introject it in his work, but without forgetting that he was living under Roman suzerainty. The Greek present was different from its archaic past and it did not appear even to follow from the past. But rather than despairing at or being complicit with the force of Rome, Plutarch forged a Greek cultural sensibility that was transformative. The cultural identity affirmed by Plutarch, then, was born in the tension between the pedagogic imperative to recover the past and the engagement with contemporaneity. And it is this tension, this movement between the founding narratives of the past and the quotidian fragility of the colonial present, that we see in such compositions as *Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae*.

In this context, scholars have suggested that Plutarch and the sophists were not, always or necessarily, mounting a critique of Roman colonialism by seeking recourse to the Greek past. Bowie notes that 'most Greeks were in no real sense *anti-Roman*, and their absorption in the Greek past *complemented* their acquiescence in the politically defective Roman present'.²⁶ Certainly, many if not all of the Greek writers invoked their past, at least in part, as a response to Roman rule. However, this view needs to be modified somewhat if it is to bear on our discussion. Paul Veyne has pointed out that bourgeois relief and satisfaction can coexist with regret, bitterness and patriotism.²⁷ In fact, to weigh Plutarch's work for its 'acquiescence' with the Roman authorities is to restate the claim of Rome's priority and dominance. Acquiescence is not a legitimate criterion to introduce into this discussion since the conditions of colonialism, by definition, would not have allowed it to be voluntary: 'For no authority can

τοῦ ἱερέως ('The Amphictyonic counsel honours Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus, son of the divine Trajan Parthicus, grandson of the divine Nerva. Mestrius Plutarchus the priest officiated as curator from Delphi.'). The name 'Mestrius' suggests that Plutarch received the citizenship from his friend L. Mestrius Florus.

²⁶ Bowie (1974) 209. This view is widely held. See Barrow (1967) 132; cf. Jones (1971) 129: 'Plutarch is only one of many who sympathized with Rome, consorted with powerful Romans, and preached a lesson to eastern cities that converged with Roman interests'.

²⁷ Veyne (1999) 566.

claim voluntary collaboration (except as a Nazi euphemism) from its subordinates without allowing the latter a choice not to collaborate, and such a choice was, of course, incompatible with the autocracy that was the very essence of that rulership'.²⁸ Moreover, Plutarch's work does interrogate pastness in order to provoke a confrontation with the conditions that make such a frame of reference possible. Contemporary Greece, when held up to comparison with the classical past, was bound to fall short and seem lacking. But it was from the space between the 'accumulative temporality' of the archaic and the 'recursive' time of the present that a new sense of Greekness and identity was fashioned.²⁹ In many ways, as noted above, this disjunctive space was liberating and culturally fertile and it gave birth to the phenomenon known as the Second Sophistic. And it was also through the exploration of this disjunction that Plutarch was able to indicate the contradictions inherent in the Roman empire.

Plutarch's engagement with the Greek past functioned as an intervention in the Roman imperial situation. That situation varied considerably under the emperors, from Claudius and Nero through the Flavians to Trajan and Hadrian, though Plutarch's involvement with the past was a constant feature of his work and recurs throughout the corpus. Of course, the philhellenic emperors such as Nero, Trajan and Hadrian encouraged and supported Greek culture and education. Plutarch may have had cordial relations with Trajan and Hadrian and may even have received titles and positions from them.³⁰ Within the context of philhellenism, therefore, the efforts of Plutarch and his contemporaries elucidate Roman politics in conformity with imperial prerogatives, though this work, and least of all Plutarch's, never serves simply as propaganda. Roman philhellenism and Plutarch's literary accomplishments are implicated in each other in ways that are not always straightforward, as *Præcepta Gerendae Reipublicae* makes clear. During Plutarch's youth—Plutarch was born in the 40s CE and died after 120—Nero spent fifteen months travelling in Greece and in 67 gave the Greeks 'freedom together with exemption from tribute, freedom that not even in your most prosperous days did you all enjoy' (ἐλευθερίαν, ἀνισφορίαν, ἣν οὐδ' ἐν τοῖς εὐτυχιστάτοις ἡμῶν

²⁸ Guha (1997) xviii.

²⁹ The phrases come from Bhabha (1994) 145.

³⁰ Barrow (1967) 45–50; Jones (1971) 28–34; Bowie (1997).

πάντες χρόνοις ἔσχετε).³¹ The grant of freedom is mentioned by Plutarch when he writes of Nero that ‘the gods owed him a favour for freeing the nation that, of all those he ruled, was the best and most favoured by the gods’ (ὀφείλεσθαι δέ τι καὶ χρηστὸν αὐτῷ παρὰ θεῶν ὅτι τῶν ὑπηκόων τὸ βέλτιστον καὶ θεοφιλέστατον γένος ἡλευθέρωσε, *De Sera* 567F–568A; cf. *Flam.* 12.13). So as the result of the gods’ kindness, Nero was reborn as a frog who croaked in the marshes rather than as a viper, as first planned. A viper is one thing, a frog another: nevertheless, the anecdote can scarcely be taken as an affirmation of the philhellenic emperor’s life.

With the Flavians, there is little evidence to show friendly relations or direct ties between Plutarch and the emperors, though for thirty years, from 66/67 to 96 CE, Plutarch lived as an increasingly prominent figure under their rule. He may have visited Rome in this period. C. P. Jones writes: ‘His attitude to the Flavians is notably hostile. Vespasian is characterised as cruel and unhappy. Domitian is the type of arrogance, superstition and tasteless extravagance. But, at least in Plutarch’s attitude to Domitian, it is difficult to separate the author’s own experience from the general revulsion of the Greek and Roman upper class against the emperor.’³² In truth, it is hard to determine Plutarch’s attitude to the Flavians from any explicit references in his own writings because such references are too few and too brief to allow for any firm judgements. Plutarch was probably

³¹ *IG* 7.2713 = *ILS* 8794 = *SIG* 814; see Suet. *Nero* 24.2.

³² Jones (1971) 25, who refers to *Amat.* 771C; a neutral reference to Vespasian in *Publ.* 15.2; *Num.* 19.7; *Quaest. Rom.* 276E; *Publ.* 15.3–6. It is possible that the first of these passages is a hostile reference to Vespasian. In the reign of the emperor, Sabinus raised a rebellion in Gaul, but failed; rather than escape, he lived in an underground chamber. His wife secretly used to visit him there for several months to the point where she even bore him two children. Eventually she was punished by Vespasian: ἀποκτείνει μὲν οὖν αὐτὴν ὁ Καῖσαρ· ἀποκτείνας δὲ δίδωσι δίκην, ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ τοῦ γένους παντὸς ἄρδην ἀναιρεθέντος· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἦνεγκεν ἡ τὸθ’ ἡγεμονία σκυθρωπότερον οὐδὲ μᾶλλον ἑτέραν εἰκὸς ἦν καὶ θεοὺς καὶ δαίμονας ὄψιν ἀποστραφῆναι. καίτοι τὸν οἶκτον ἐξήρει τῶν θεωμένων τὸ θαρραλέον αὐτῆς καὶ μεγαλήγορον, ᾧ καὶ μάλιστα παρώξυνε τὸν Οὐεσπασσιανόν, ὡς ἀγέγνω τῆς σωτηρίας πρὸς αὐτὸν | ἀλλαγὴν κελεύουσα· βεβιωκέναι γὰρ ὑπὸ σκότῳ καὶ κατὰ γῆς ἥδιον ἢ | βασιλεύων ἐκείνως (‘Caesar did in the end have her executed; but he paid the penalty, for his whole family was destroyed within a short time. No action of his reign was grimmer or more likely to cause gods and *daimones* to turn away from him. Her bold words both lessened the spectators’ pity for her and angered Vespasian. When she had no more hope of life, she bade him change places with her; for, as she said, she had “enjoyed life more in the darkness underground than he did on the throne”, 771C).

disaffected by the expulsions of philosophers from Rome and Italy that took place in the reigns of Vespasian and Domitian: one of his friends, Arulenus Rusticus, was put to death.³³ And in one important respect, Vespasian took a step that must have annoyed many Greeks, including Plutarch. Pausanias remarks that the freedom given by Nero to the Greeks was short-lived because 'in the reign of Vespasian, the next emperor after Nero, they became embroiled in a civic war; Vespasian ordered that they should again pay tribute and be subject to a governor, saying that the Greek people had forgotten how to be free' (Οὐεσπασιανοῦ γὰρ μετὰ Νέρωνα ἄρξαντος ἐς ἐμφύλιον στάσιν προήχθησαν, καὶ σφᾶς ὑποτελεῖς τε αὖθις ὁ Οὐεσπασιανὸς εἶναι φόρων καὶ ἀκούειν ἐκέλευσεν ἡγεμόνος, ἀπομεμαθηκέναι φήσας τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τὸ Ἑλληνικόν, Paus. 7.17.4; see Suet. *Vesp.* 8.4).³⁴ Greece had been 'free' only in the attenuated sense that the word had in imperial times, of course; what Vespasian really meant was that he wanted to resume collecting taxes in Achaea.³⁵

What is interesting from our perspective is that it is precisely in this context of the Greeks' *forgetting* that Plutarch's project of *remembering* the Hellenic past marks out a fertile role for literature and makes it a liberating space for cultural identification. Plutarch's work simultaneously maps out the pattern of nostalgic loss and the strategy for taking advantage of it. His writings introduce a temporal rupture and a discontinuity that they answer, in turn, with the demonstration that remembering the past can be the way to forge and maintain a cultural identity in the present. When Plutarch is dispensing advice as a wedding-gift to a couple, he says to the bride:

³³ Jones (1971) 24.

³⁴ Apollonius of Tyana's reply to the emperor was: Νέρων τοὺς Ἕλληνας παίζων ἡλευθέρωσε, σὺ δὲ αὐτοὺς σπουδάζων ἐδουλώσω ('Nero freed the Hellenes in play, but you have enslaved them in all seriousness', Philostr. *VA* 5.41). See Alcock (1993) 16.

³⁵ It may be that the Flavians introduced some degree of economic prosperity and stability in the province of Achaea. Vespasian established chairs of rhetoric in Athens and Rome with salaries of *HS* 100,000 and in 75 CE he gave teachers, doctors and physiotherapists special rights in the cities in which they lived: see Levick (1999) 76. According to Levick (2000) 609, only a few cities gained in prosperity under the Flavians: 'Corinth, where building activity was unceasing from the earthquake of 77 until the end of Hadrian's reign; Patras; Athens, the banking centre of Greece; Sparta, which achieved particular wealth during the Principate; and philo-Roman Thespiae'. There is no evidence of any direct economic impact on Plutarch.

σὺ δ' ὦ Εὐρυδίκη μάλιστα πειρῶ τοῖς τῶν σοφῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν ἀποφθέγ-
μασιν ὁμιλεῖν καὶ διὰ στόματος ἀεὶ τὰς φωνὰς ἔχειν ἐκείνας ὧν καὶ
παρθένος οὔσα παρ' ἡμῖν ἀνελάμβανες ('Familiarise yourself, Eurydice,
in particular with the sayings of good and wise men. Always have
on your lips the remarks you learnt with me as a girl', *Con Praec.*
145E). He goes on to recite a poem by Sappho that touches on
memory and renown and that in turn prompts him to refer to the
importance of 'education' (παιδεία) and 'philosophy' (φιλοσοφία).
Recollection, poetry, education, philosophy: these were not disjointed
or disconnected shards from an antiquated Greek past, for Plutarch,
but the very basis for love and life in the moment. And that this
was also a moment when exempla pertaining to Romans would occa-
sionally obtrude is clear from a reference in the same treatise to the
behaviour of Cato (*Con Praec.* 139E).³⁶ Contrary to what Vespasian
wished to maintain, Greeks such as Plutarch were adept not at for-
getting but at remembering all too well the predicament of Greece
while it remained a province ruled from Rome. As he continued to
remember, or perhaps we should say, 'to un-forget' (ἀ-λήθειν), Plutarch
wrote into his books something of the living 'truth' (ἀλήθεια) behind
the Roman emperor's lie.³⁷

³⁶ In *Coniugalīa Praecepta* ('Advice on Marriage', *Mor.* 138A–146A) and *Consolatio ad Uxorem* ('Consolation to His Wife', *Mor.* 608A–612B), which are commonly studied together, Plutarch mentions twenty-seven men and twelve women of the past. Of these, three of the men and two of the women are Roman: see Pomeroy (1999) 34–5.

³⁷ Plutarch himself makes explicit the association between memory and truth in *De Defectu Oraculorum* ('On the Decline of Oracles'), where Cleombrotus recounts that an exotic wise man told him about the existence of 183 worlds: ἔλεγε δὲ μήτ' ἀπείρους μήθ' ἓνα μήτε πέντε κόσμους, ἀλλὰ τρεῖς καὶ ὀγδοήκοντα καὶ ἑκατὸν εἶναι συντεταγμένους κατὰ σχῆμα τριγωνοειδές, οὐ πλερὰν ἑκάστην ἐξήκοντα κόσμους ἔχειν τριῶν δὲ τῶν λοιπῶν ἕκαστον ἰδρύσθαι κατὰ γωνίαν, ἅπτεσθαι δὲ τοὺς ἐφεξῆς ἀλλήλων ἀτρέμα περιόντας ὥσπερ ἐν χορείᾳ· τὸ δ' ἐντὸς ἐπίπεδον τοῦ τριγώνου κοινὴν ἐστὶν εἶναι πάντων, καλεῖσθαι δὲ πεδίον ἀληθείας, ἐν ᾧ τοὺς λόγους καὶ τὰ εἶδη καὶ τὰ παραδείγματα τῶν γεγονότων καὶ τῶν γενησομένων ἀκίνητα κεῖσθαι, καὶ περὶ αὐτὰ τοῦ αἰῶνος ὄντος οἷον ἀπορροὴν ἐπὶ τοὺς κόσμους φέρεσθαι τὸν χρόνον. ὅψιν δὲ τούτων καὶ θεὰν ψυχαῖς ἀνθρωπίναις ἅπαξ ἐν ἔτεσι μυρίοις ὑπάρχειν, ἂν γ' εὖ βιώσωσι· καὶ τῶν ἐνταῦθα τελετῶν τὰς ἀρίστας ἐκείνης ὄνειρον εἶναι τῆς ἐποπτείας καὶ τελετῆς· καὶ τοὺς λόγους ἀναμνήσεως ἕνεκα τῶν ἐκεῖ φιλοσοφεῖσθαι καλῶν ἢ μάτην περαινέσθαι ('He said that the number of worlds was not infinite, nor one, nor five, but 183, arranged in a triangle, sixty on each side, with three fixed at the angles: each lightly made contact with the next as they revolved, as in a dance; and the area within the triangle was the common hearth of the universe and was called the Plain of Truth. "Here," he said, "principles, forms and exemplars of things past and things to come lie undisturbed, surrounded

by eternity, out of which time flows like a stream toward the worlds. The sight and spectacle of these things is granted to human souls once in 10,000 years if they have lived well; the best of our initiations here are dreams of that revelation and initiation. Philosophical discussions are meant to recall that beauty to our recollection; otherwise, they are futile", *De Def. Or.* 422B–C). The phrase 'Plain of Truth' is taken from a passage in Plato's *Phaedrus* (248b) where, moreover, the opposition between ἀλήθεια ('truth') and λήθη ('forgetting') is directly expressed (248c). On both these texts see further Detienne (1996) 120–2.

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15. FLAVIAN DRAMA: LOOKING BACK WITH OCTAVIA

Joseph A. Smith

Sed quid patrios saepe penates
respicias udis confusa genis?

([Seneca], *Octavia* 665–6)¹

But why do you, confounded in tears,
So often look back at your father's home?

Octavia is a Flavian dramatic text.² Flavian *and* dramatic. Modern readings of the play have been predominantly framed by two issues of reception: the play's marked compositional differences from the constituent plays of the Senecan tragic corpus with which *Octavia* has been transmitted from antiquity, and its status as history play (that is, how the play serves as representative of Roman history drama and how this particular history drama serves to inform Neronian history). Scholars have assessed the play in stylistic terms with such

¹ Ancient texts quoted, or translated: [Seneca's] *Octavia*, Zwiernlein (1986) (restored to the reading of A where noted); Tacitus' *Dialogus*, Heubner (1983). All translations are mine.

² Context counts for everything. The very inclusion of a reading of *Octavia* in a volume on Flavian Rome begins the hermeneutic process with more critical momentum than the mass of authoritative assertion (see below, nn. 3–5) that the play has been improperly lodged in the corpus of Senecan tragedy. Despite the vigour of my own assertions, the hermeneutics employed here must necessarily operate upon assumptions (and no more than assumptions) about the original historic and histrionic context of this play's production. The identity of the playwright, the patronage lent that poet, the manner, circumstances and date of the 'original' publication and performance of the text, the traditions, on-going from the time of the republic, governing the presentation of *fabulae praetextae*—such facets of production as costuming, masking, economy of role distribution among actors, the size of the chorus, and the disposition of the chorus on (or near) the Roman stage—let alone whether *Octavia* was intended to follow those traditions without unusual modification, and, as for the play's textual reception, the circumstances that ultimately brought the play into the A tradition of manuscripts of Senecan tragedies: these traditional problems cannot be treated in the scope of this study and will likely not ever be resolved with full confidence. Yet the conditions of performance here hypothesised for *Octavia* are grounded in and supported by the best evidence we have—the text. In any event, I begin the interpretative process substantially indebted to the editors who have created a space in this volume for such hypothetical play.

descriptors as 'un-Senecan',³ 'post-Senecan',⁴ or 'post-Neronian'.⁵ Few would now dissent even from the last of these.⁶ Yet with this set of critical modifiers has been bound a second set, characterising the play's relative merit *qua* play: un-dramatic, un-poetic, unsuccessful.⁷

³ Helm (1934) 283–347 for the qualification and quantification of stylistic difference between *Octavia* and the other tragedies of the Senecan corpus; supplemental observations summarised in Coffey (1957) 177–80 and further observations in Herington (1961) 24–7, Zwierlein (1984) esp. 204–5, 216–17, 224–33, Fitch (1987) 92–4, Zwierlein (1992) 505–6, and now Junge (1999) 221–72. In addition to the evidence of stylistic difference, the authenticity of *Octavia*, as of *Hercules* [*Oetaeus*], is suspect due to the play's relatively weak tradition in the manuscripts, being transmitted only in the A family of manuscripts, on which see Schmidt (1978) 25 and most succinctly Zwierlein (1986) vi.

⁴ This claim is traditionally supported by the threefold evidence of (1) the very presence of Seneca as a character in the drama, (2) the inability of this character to argue beyond the language and scope of 'his own' texts, chiefly *Ad Helviam* and *De Clementia* (compare the notes of Hosius (1922) esp. ad 440–62 and 472–91, for a rough estimation of the extent of the influence), and (3) allusion to events after Seneca's death, chiefly the death of Nero. Schmidt (1978) 34–5. On chronology: Tacitus relates the suicide of Seneca (*Ann.* 15.62–4) in the immediate fallout from the failed conspiracy of Piso (a coup to have transpired at the games to Ceres, mid-April 65 CE [*Ann.* 15.53]). Poppaea's dream vision (*Oct.* 714–33), whatever else it presages, certainly foretells her own death (Tacitus puts the event in late 65 CE [*Ann.* 16.6]) and that of her first husband, Crispinus (which Tacitus [*Ann.* 16.17] inserts in the *agmen* of secondary suicides following the detection of Piso's conspiracy, early 66 CE).

⁵ Agrippina's prediction (with the prescient authority due ghostly apparitions), *Oct.* 618–31, alludes to Nero's unhappy demise and is commonly taken as a *uaticinatio ex euentu*. The wistful promise of Octavia's nurse, *fortisan uindex deus existet aliquis* ('perhaps some god will come as a vindicator', *Oct.* 255–6), is unconvincing as his historic allusion to Vindex's revolt of June 68 CE (Kragelund [1988] 506); yet Suetonius (*Nero* 45.2) suggests that for a very brief window in history an audience might have inferred much from an actor's knowing delivery of the word *uindex* ('avenger'). The *deus uindex* ('avenging god') wished for by Octavia's nurse foreshadows the *dea* ('goddess') who will in fact make a later appearance (593), bringing her 'vindicating hand' (*uindex manus*, 596) to Poppaea's wedding.

⁶ Kragelund (1988) 499 n. 26 evidences the minimal influence exerted by the last major defence of Senecan authorship, Whitman (1978). And yet, more recently, Flower (1995) 170–2, 189–90, esp. 190, given her positions that republican *praelectae* were only written about early Roman history or about events contemporaneous with and reflecting positively on their supporting patrons, and that imperial *praelectae* were (1) generically distinct from republican *praelectae*, (2) recitation drama and (3) the product of an aristocratic, Stoic opposition to imperial power, while she catalogues *Octavia* as un-Senecan, seems not convinced that it need be post-Neronian.

⁷ Criticism of *Octavia*'s poetic shortcomings abounds: Coffey (1957) 177–82 catalogues from Helm onwards the tendency to judge difference from Senecan style, particularly the spare use of vocabulary and repetitive thematic texturing, as the mark of inferior poetry. The charge of amateurism leveled repetitiously against the poet (most famously, Herington [1961] 27) always seems a calculated plea-bargain to rescue from the evidence of such unimaginatively presented events a reliable eyewitness to history. Sutton (1983) 2–3, whose interests fall squarely in stage history,

Those clear indications in the text of a playwright striving to create affinities between *Octavia* and such traditional tragedy as Sophocles' *Electra*, to steep the language of the play in Senecan phrase and cadence, and to borrow generally the stock elements of plot construction from both Greek and Roman drama have been used as proof not of the theatrical nature of *Octavia* but of its artificiality and un-theatricality. The play has been doubly damned by the (often tacit) assumption that it is a recitation drama and by the aesthetic judgement that it is a bad recitation drama.⁸ In so far as it has been pronounced the prosaic product of a non-professional, marginally talented 'poet' (read senatorial partisan), the play has been allowed to serve as historical testimony to the turmoil of post-Neronian Rome, liable to source criticism and candidate as a databank for the historical researches of the likes of Tacitus.⁹ Consequently, little has been done to confront *Octavia* as something more than an *un-* or *post-* text, to interrogate the assumption that the drama can be easily mined (once its literary trappings are stripped away) for its nuggets of historical information, to construct for the playwright motives for composition other than pious service to a philosophical system or the aggrandisement of a momentary political movement, and ultimately to read the play for what it appears to be: the textual relic of a stage production that was meant for an imperial Roman audience.¹⁰

shows the influence of such criticism when he determines the playwright to be a 'bold experimentalist . . . even if he was not a sufficiently good or experienced playwright to make a success of his innovations . . .'.

⁸ Sutton (1983) and now Wiseman (1998) 53 have adopted a rather lonely perspective in envisaging *Octavia* as a stage piece. Ferri (1998) 339–56 though willing to conceive of characters in the play 'return[ing] to the stage' (340) and even of the play having 'spectators' (341), is largely concerned with the *Octavia*-poet's written sources and imagines a poet 'composing from written sources and overwhelmed by the bulk of information at his disposal' and an Octavia who 'is very much a paper heroine' (342–3 n. 7).

⁹ Carbone (1977) 66–7; Barnes (1982) 215–17; Ferri (1998) 339–56.

¹⁰ Whether or not *Octavia* was read out in recitative performance, as the imperial institution of the *recitatio* is now understood (see, for example, Hutchinson [1993] 145–6), is inconsequential to this study. It is not known whether *Octavia* was actually produced in the lifetime of its author. But, that the author's ultimate compositional objective for the text was its realisation as a staged production (as opposed to publication as *liber* exclusively for reading consumption) is fairly obvious from several peculiar features of the text: the adherence to the principles of economy of acting parts (on which see sec. 1, esp. n. 26, and sec. 5); the expectation of the recognition of characters without textual signification of their names (on which see secs 1 and 6); the maintenance of purely scenic conventions such as the aside at 435–6 (to mark the entrance of a character) or the observation at 72–3 that one

Octavia is a tragedy that takes its plot from events of Roman history. As such, it is different from Senecan mythological tragedies and must be treated on its own terms. But on its own terms as a tragedy. To credit the stylistic 'peculiarities' of *Octavia* to the generic distinction that 'must' have existed between imperial *fabulae cothurnatae* and *fabulae praetextae*,¹¹ indeed, to credit any difference to such a generic distinction, simply obviates accounting for the purpose and effect of *Octavia*'s compositional characteristics and raises the more problematic question of why the author chose this genre over that.¹² Our limited evidence minimises the importance of the distinction and makes dubious the enterprise of turning *Octavia* into some sort of prosaic chronicle whose music was dampened in order to sing the Truth of History.¹³ Consider the evidence Tacitus provides in his *Dialogus*. Curvatus Maternus, whose controversial career as drama-

character has heard (but not yet seen) another character; the intratextual indications of the presence of silent extras (for example, Poppaea's description of Agrippina haunting her bedchamber with *matres Latinae* ['Latin mothers', 720] who are not explicitly mentioned by Agrippina in her monologue before her visitation [593–645], or Octavia's address of a group of captors [899–900] who are likely not the chorus); and the problematic character of the chorus of Roman citizens whose shifts of allegiance from ode to ode are so radical as to make it difficult not to assume, with only meagre textual cues, that the play must have had more than one faction playing the citizens (on which see sec. 6). All of which would impede the easy comprehension and enjoyment of the text for an audience listening at a recitation; some of which even bar the silent reader, text in hand, from easy consumption. But none of these 'peculiarities' would be noticed by a spectator. Indeed, all of these 'peculiarities' are simply part and parcel of vital theatre.

¹¹ The expression, *fabula cothurnata*, is used throughout here as idiomatic shorthand for 'a tragedy written in Latin with a traditionally Greek mythological plot' (e.g., Seneca's *Agamemnon* or *Oedipus*), analogous to *fabula palliata*, and distinct from *fabula praetexta*, 'a play written in Latin with a plot and characters taken from Roman history' (e.g., *Octavia*). So defined, the generic classification of *Octavia* is unaffected by the fact that no character need appear costumed in a bordered toga. To distinguish between *cothurnatae* and *praetextae* is not to suggest mutually exclusive or even hierarchical categorisation; the critical discourse of the imperial period implicitly warns against this (on which see below, nn. 15 and 16). Seneca, in defining the dramatic genre, *fabula togata*, is comfortable suggesting a generic hybrid of tragedy and comedy (*Ep.* 8.8). See Wiseman (1998) 3–11.

¹² Roman tragic playwrights were well inclined to write history drama: Naevius (the purported inventor of the genre), Ennius, Pacuvius and Accius—the 'Greats' of republican tragedy (missing only Livius Andronicus)—each wrote at least one *praetexta*. See Flower (1995) 190.

¹³ See Poe (1989) 435–8 for the formulation of a critical approach to *Octavia* assessing where the 'encodation of history is not entirely consistent with the literary encodation' (437) of the Senecan tragic plot. The encodings of history, according to Poe, must triumph over the demands of fiction and account for the play's literary shortcomings.

tist under Vespasian serves as triggering subject for that dialogue's debate on the function of rhetoric and the rhetorical craftsman within the imperial system, bears witness to the interchangeability of dramatic genres for achieving one's rhetorical and political purposes (*Dial.* 3.1–4).¹⁴ Maternus is portrayed rushing to put the *manus ultima* on his history play, *Cato*, that he might offer a more effective (that is, overt) social critique with a mythological tragedy, *Thyestes* (*Dial.* 3.3).¹⁵ Maternus' critique of culture, so *Dialogus* indicates, is continuous and singular despite his planned generic shift from historical to mythological drama: the play is the thing. Maternus' interlocutor, Marcus Aper, mockingly belittles Maternus' efforts precisely because his literary achievements have intermingled Roman historic figures and Greek mythological characters: *nostras quoque historias et Romana nomina Graeculorum fabulis adgregares* ('You are shepherding even our chronicles and Roman names into the fold of plays of the trifling Greeks', *Dial.* 3.4).¹⁶

Yet certainly Octavia is comfortable in such company. Witness her desire in the *Octavia*'s opening lines (7–9) to rival mythological counterparts, Alcyon or the daughters of Pandion, in plaintive song.¹⁷

¹⁴ To say nothing of Maternus' ease of career transition from barrister honing his arguments for public consumption in the *fora* to poet crafting scenes for performance in the recital hall and theatre.

¹⁵ Julius Secundus prompts Maternus with the suggestion that final revision will involve making *Cato/Cato* 'not better but more politically expedient' (*non quidem meliorem, sed tamen securiorem*, *Dial.* 3.2). This elicits from the playwright the boast that *Cato/Cato* will remain as 'insecure' as Secundus fears (*adgnosces quae audisti*, 'you will recognise what you have heard') and that 'what *Cato/Cato* has left out, *Thyestes/Thyestes* will say' (*quod . . . omisit Cato . . . Thyestes dicet*, 3.3).

¹⁶ Ovid (*Am.* 3.1), working under Augustus in a different generic category of *car-men*, had represented Tragoedia upbraiding him for wasting time mythologising himself in elegy (*fabula . . . tota iactaris in urbe*, 'you are passed about as myth in the whole city', 3.1.21), when the 'greater undertaking' (*maius opus*, 3.1.24) of creating Roman tragedies that could depict the 'deeds of [Roman] heroes' (*facta uirorum*, 3.1.25) awaited. The National Theatre, as Ovid's Tragoedia would have it, was a *locus* where the facts of history could be danced out in *cothurni*. Ovid's *maius opus* reminds us also (by compressed allusion to Virg. *Aen.* 7.44–5) that the programmatic text of imperial ideology had already effectively confounded meaningful distinction between Roman mythology and history.

¹⁷ Octavia invokes Electra to claim deeper suffering than hers (*Oct.* 57–71). That the play is intertextually bound to Sophocles' *Electra* has been extensively treated. See Schmidt (1985) 1426 and 1451 for relevant bibliography; Whitman (1978) 7 *ad* 1, 53–4 *ad* 57–99. The conclusion of *Octavia* makes explicit comparison between Octavia and Iphigenia (974–9). Recently Grazzini (1998) 89–94 has traced affinities of emplotment between Octavia's lyric exit and Alcestis' death scene in Euripides' tragedy (*Alc.* 252–64).

In a larger sense, *Octavia* as *praetexta* pleads for the interchangeability of its subject matter with that of the *cothurnata*: it mimics, alludes to, illustrates, comments upon and attempts to provide coda to the monuments of Senecan theatre.¹⁸ That Octavia and her nurse, or Nero and Seneca, or Nero and his prefect enact scenes in *Octavia* analogous to scenes in *Medea* or *Thyestes* or *Agamemnon* provides us with an interpretative response (among our earliest) to Senecan drama: *Octavia*'s playwright apparently saw in Seneca's mythological plots a reflection of the socio-political climate of the later Julio-Claudian dynasty in which Senecan tragedy was spawned. *Octavia*, in turn, reflects history back on mythology. It mythologises its historical subjects and in so doing is more highly mimetic of (Senecan) tragedy than it is of any conceivable annalistic account of Nero's reign. To complete the analogy, we should do well to read *Octavia* not simply as an account of the crisis in the history of the Julio-Claudian dynasty there portrayed but as a reflection of a later socio-historic climate, a distinctively Flavian climate as I shall argue here, which caused the playwright to look back and to mythologise.

In what follows I have attempted to construct a set of strategies for reading *Octavia* tailored to highlight those qualities of craftsmanship manifest in the text yet scarcely noticed in standard readings of the play. These strategies consider *Octavia* as a work for the stage and take into account, as far as the text will allow, the semiotic effects of staging. Audience perception has been given privilege over imperceptible structural organisations in the text (as, for example, so-called act divisions that lack choral interludes). The organisation of scenic space is considered a significant contributing element to thematic meaning. And, just as important, the dynamics of character interaction, the unique tensions generated in a plot by the particular combinations of characters meeting in dialogue on stage, these are treated not as mimetic reflection of some historic reality but as the conscious choices of a playwright working to reveal the potentials and limitations in the characters so designed. Ultimately, such reading strategies are designed to take into account the audience both entering and leaving the theatre. I have looked to the text for what indications it can provide about the playwright and audience

¹⁸ See Williams (1994) 179–80 for a sampling of criticism tracing *Octavia*'s inter-textual allusions to Senecan tragedy.

working together to generate a dramatic reality. And I have found in the text the indications of a playwright seeking both to gratify an audience by providing a spectacle that will fascinate it and make it a willing participant in the fiction presented and, once the play is ended, to exploit fascination in order to change the audience's perception of non-dramatic reality.

1. *Dawn of a New Stage: Drama as Wax Museum*

Octavia resurrects Nero as the paradigmatic hated and hateful tyrant. Plainly he was dead at the time of the play's production.¹⁹ All the historic personages, for that matter, who are conjured for the drama—Octavia, Seneca, Nero, Agrippina, Poppaea—were dead. Gone but not forgotten: the play expects an audience with a collective memory steeped in the details of Julio-Claudian history, capable of identifying the spectres who tread the boards. From the opening lines a complex web of imperial interfamilial relations is alluded to or referenced with the slightest tokens of identification, rapidly rehearsed to explain the emotional allegiances or repulsions of characters, their psychological investments or divestitures, and their fundamental motivations to action. The prologue of the play has Octavia, without any allusion to her own nominative identity, reference Messalina with only the poetic noun, *genetrix* ('begetter', 10), reference the circumstances of Messalina's death with the mere mention of wounds and bloody face (16–17), reference Agrippina with only the noun, *nouerca* ('step-mother', 21), reference Claudius with *pater* ('father', 25), and reference Nero with *coniunx* ('spouse', 31) and *tyrannus* ('tyrant', 33).²⁰

¹⁹ Agrippina's prophetic vision of Nero's death (see above, n. 5) aside, her Jocasta-like wish that she had been torn apart by beasts while pregnant so that her son could gaze upon *proavos patremque, nominis magni uiros* ('forefathers and father, men with a great name', 641) in secure quiet anticipates an unlikely detail in the death of Nero: his remains were placed on the Via Flaminia in the tomb of *Domitii* (Suet. *Nero* 50.1).

²⁰ Messalina, who had suffered a *damnatio memoriae* in 48 CE (Tac. *Ann.* 11.38), is not given a proper name in the play; Agrippina, referred to as 'Augusta', once by the chorus (327) and once by Poppaea's nurse (748), complains of nominal erasure (609–11), which itself has been taken as proof of some sort of *damnatio* not mentioned by Tacitus and later sources; Whitman (1978) 99–100. The playwright has scrupulously avoided letting Seneca or the prefect, the two characters who interact with Nero, address the emperor with any vocative. While Octavia (249), Seneca (435), the chorus (671, 953) and Poppaea (716, 733) utter the name, Nero, six times,

Only late in the play does anyone care to identify Octavia by proper name—the chorus, ('Claudia', 671), Poppaea's nurse ('Octavia', 746) and the messenger ('Octavia', 786; 'Claudia', 789, 803)—and only when speaking about her in her absence.²¹ Either the audience is immediately familiar with Octavia, can identify her when they see her, and can connect her catalogue of familial allusions to proper historical referents, or the playwright is weaving a web of nonsense.

Realisation of the text in performance would have removed many of the ambiguities of character identification. For while every character (with the noticeable exception of Nero) makes dramatic entrance with either extremely delayed nominal identification or none at all, all characters are keen to reify their own identities and to substantiate their own flesh.²² The playwright has everywhere scripted into anapaests and iambs a rather significant number of self-referential gesturing devices. Consider the lines:

Age, tot tantis onerata malis,
 repete assuetos iam *tibi* questus
 atque aequoreas uince Alcyonas,
 uince et uolucres Pandionias:
 grauior namque his fortuna *tua* est.
 Semper genetrix deflenda *mihi* . . .

([Seneca], *Octavia* 5–10)

Get up! weighed down with so many evils,
 Repeat lamentations now quite familiar *to you*,
 And out-sing sea-faring Halcyons,
 Out-sing even warbling Pandion's daughters:

and though Octavia mentions that he is the unworthy product of his father, Domitius (249), he is simply *tyrannus* in seven other references. Nero will make claims of the properties suitable to a Caesar (457). Whatever the Caesars were—and Nero explicitly reserves for himself revisionist authority over that issue (e.g., 449)—the playwright distances Nero from the title Caesar. Compare Seneca's mode of salutation in *De Clementia* (Nero Caesar at 1.1.1 and 2.1.1) and Apollo's song in *Apocolocyntosis* (4.1.30) linking the name Caesar to the name Nero. For the apparent fetishisation of the title, Caesar, following the death of Nero, Tac. *Hist.* 1.29–30, Cass. Dio 72.10. Suetonius reports that Helvidius Priscus ran afoul of Vespasian because 'he alone had addressed [him] by his personal name' (*solus priuato nomine Vespasianum salutauerat*, Suet. *Vesp.* 15.1).

²¹ I assume that, following her anapaests that she begins by forbidding the chorus to weep for her (646–50), Octavia departs from the palace and the stage (667–8), leaving the chorus to sing their anapaests (669–89) alone. See further on this scene below, n. 41.

²² Nero's entrance is clearly heralded by Seneca's anticipatory line (435–6).

For more oppressive than theirs is *your* misfortune.
I must ever mourn *my* mother . . .

So Octavia. Rising with the sun, she moves into a highly self-conscious musical performance (aware, as she is, of formulaic devices for preluding funeral dirges, aware of appropriate mythological rivals, aware of appropriate metric strains to suit genre). Self-consciousness is to be found in the rhetoric of apostrophising the self—*age!* ('get up!'), *repete!* ('repeat!'), *uince!* ('defeat!')—a device that is substrate of the theatricalisation of character in Senecan drama.²³ Less Senecan, as is frequently observed by *Octavia*'s stylistic critics, is the emphatic placement of self-referential pronouns and possessive adjectives—*tibi* ('to you', 6, emphatic because not syntactically necessary), *tua* ('your', 9), *mihi* ('my', 10).²⁴ But these have performative purpose. Octavia is gesturing to herself; given her mode of song, these gestures likely resound plangorously. Every historic character in the drama, for that matter, is motivated to articulate the self through such emphatically placed self-demonstrative gesturing cues. These ubiquitous markers in the text do not betoken the construction of narcissistic figures performing to themselves; rather, they are devices pandering to an audience's voyeuristic curiosity about a bygone world of imperial celebrity.

The climax of Octavia's play-opening bedchamber soliloquy foregrounds the very problem of her celebrity status: *nunc in luctus servata meos/magni resto nominis umbra* ('Now reserved for my miseries/I remain a shadow of a great name', 70–1). Octavia means that she is the remnant of her family, the last member standing; but for an audience watching *Octavia* from its historic vantage, her appearance on stage would have been something of a resurrection, as though her ghost were literally standing again.²⁵ And such are the indications that the playwright assumes a high interest value on the part of his audience in the sheer spectacle of the play's historic personages apparently living and breathing once again.

²³ See Boyle (1997) 129–33, for a concise programmatic study of character construction via Seneca's *Medea*; see Sen. *Apocol.* 12 for satiric sample of anapaestic funeral dirge.

²⁴ For example, Herington (1961) 27, who sees the playwright's dependency on the device but does not account for its purpose.

²⁵ Friedländer (1968a) 97, citing anecdotal evidence from Philostr. *VA* 5.195, imagines that even the 'strange figures in *cothurni*', costumed for performance, would have looked 'like ghosts from a dead world'. See Beacham (1991) 185–9 for the 'transmogrification of] the form of the tragic actor into an overgrown *simulacrum* of a man . . . '.

This sheer spectacle would have necessitated a performance in masks.²⁶ The use of 'realistic' masks, the kind clearly signifying who is who, could simultaneously account for the reticence of *Octavia's* characters to attach nominative identity to themselves and, in borrowing (as it would have) from the semiotics of the public and private display of *imagines* ('familial death masks'), accord with characters' intense self-construction of identity in terms of their familial connections.²⁷ In this aspect of production, the *praetexta* begs for special interpretation and distinction from *cothurnatae*.

Masking would also accord with another thematic element of the text: repeatedly we find characters expressing their psychological states of anguish in terms of a physiognomic evaluation of the object of their torment. Affliction is the humour of the face. Octavia thinks it a punishment worse than death 'to see the puffed and fierce countenance of the tyrant, to join kisses with the enemy, to fear his nods' (*uidere tumidos et truces miseræ mihi/uultus tyranni, iungere atque hosti oscula, timere nutus*, 109–11).²⁸ Seneca, his meditations interrupted by the approach of Nero in the following scene, looks into the very countenance (*truci uultu*, 436) that has repulsed Octavia and reads there some horrifying machination. Nero's own immediate fixation is upon the heads of Plautus and Sulla that he orders be brought to him (437–8).²⁹ As goes his reading of Octavia's visage, Nero has found

²⁶ Sutton (1983) 23–6, finding *Octavia's* economy of role distribution not unlike what is found in Senecan tragedy, demonstrates the ease of assignment of parts to three actors. His scheme (26 fig. ii) assigns three roles to each actor and expects each actor to play characters of either sex. What is needed of the third actor can be reduced to a bare minimum, leaving two highly competent leads (each capable, among several other things, of handling the anapaestic arias of the opening act) to shoulder the remaining duties. Sutton is assuming, of course, a masked company.

²⁷ Slater (1996) 34–9 discusses the problematic nature of the adjective, realistic, in describing masks meant to represent 'real' people, and, contrasting the essential differences between imperial, veristic *imagines* and the highly stylised theatrical masks of the period (*personae*), concludes that anecdotal evidence from Suet. *Nero* 21.3 and Cass. Dio 63.9 indicates a precedent (apparently established by Nero himself) for use of veristic masks in the context of tragic performance that 'really' looked like Nero or Poppaea. My own prejudice as a literary historian inclines me to read the representation of Nero and Poppaea in *Octavia* as a contributing influence to the development not only of the later tradition of Nero as libidinous tyrant but of the construct of the *scaenicus Imperator* (Pliny's expression, *Pan.* 46.4) encountered in Tacitus and Suetonius. Flower (1996) 115 warns against overemphasis on distinction between *imago* and *persona*, citing Suet. *Vesp.* 19.2, where *persona* is used of Vespasian's death mask. See Boyle (1997) 116.

²⁸ Echoed by Octavia in anapaests, 654–5.

²⁹ Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 14.58: Nero regarding the premature grey on the head of Sulla;

there the 'plain indications' (*manifesta signa*, 541–2) of her hatred for him. The face, in all of these readings, in so far as it provides the superficial signs of the underlying person, functions as mask; Nero's court, as *Octavia* would have it, is a cabinet of living *imagines*.³⁰

Familiarity with imperial interrelation and familiarity with the imperial *personae*—so runs the case for a poet and an audience historically proximate to the subjects depicted in the play.³¹ Further bracing the argument for the proximity of the text's production to Neronian times is a familiarity of a slightly different order: playwright and audience were familiar with Seneca. *Octavia* is steeped in allusion and reference to his tragedies; it cribs scenes, stances, attitudes and then innovates.³² More telling, the character Seneca is steeped in allusion and reference to such prose works as *Ad Helviam* and *De Clementia*. This intertextual referencing would likely have been lost on an audience within a half generation of Seneca's death.³³

Yet *Octavia* exhibits and expects familiarity not simply with the tragic and philosophical *oeuvres*, but with the lineaments of Seneca's tragic and philosophical *imago uitae*. Again we have a figure entering

14.59: Nero regarding the severed head of Plautus; 14.64: Poppaea regarding the severed head of Octavia.

³⁰ Further pointed references to or appearances of the face: Octavia's recurring dream that Nero attacks the eyes and mouth of Britannicus (119); Octavia's claim that Poppaea has demanded from Nero Octavia's head (132–3); the remembrance of Octavia's nurse of Britannicus' divine face upon the pyre (172–3); the drowning Agrippina's invocation of Claudius that he raise his face from Hell (338–9); Nero's recounting of the heads of those proscribed by the second triumvirate in the Forum (510–13); Agrippina's account of Claudius' assault on her face (614–5); Octavia's freedom from having to look Nero in the face (654–5); choral disgust at the 'realistic' *imagines* of Poppaea (685–6); the concern of Poppaea's nurse with Poppaea's tearful face (692, 710) in contrast to the impressiveness of Poppaea's veiled head on her wedding day (702); Nero's outrage at a common mob daring to raise their eyes to the 'holy visage' (*sanctos uultus*, 843) of Poppaea.

³¹ See Junge (1999) 197–99 for a catalogue the poet's (and his audience's) familiarity with the details of history transcendent of learning acquired from written sources.

³² In the memorable assessment of Herington (1961) 28: 'As for the Senecan tragedies, our author so reproduces their style, vocabulary, and phraseology that he must have known them almost by heart. In short, anything that one individual can take over from another, our author has taken over from the real Seneca'.

³³ Herington (1982) 530. Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* gauges the degree to which the popularity of Seneca's texts and the fashion of Senecan style had waned from absolute dominance to insignificance in the course of Quintilian's twenty year career—spanning Galba's reign to Domitian's (68–88 CE)—as officially sanctioned rhetor. Herington (1961) 29, on the strength of this witness, suggests 90 CE as *terminus ante quem* for *Octavia*.

the play with a self-dramatising monologue who, while offering credentials and tokens of identification, lacks a proper name: in his first eight lines he will reference Corsica (382), but, save for the vague description of a remote hiding place (*latebam . . . remotus*, 381–2), he makes no clear reference to an exilic stay there.³⁴ His identity is only cognominally fixed at the end of his interview with Nero (589), perhaps even after he has left the stage.³⁵ In place of nominal identification, the playwright offers Seneca engaged in philosophical speculation, musing over the course of universal history (as we shall see below in sec. 3b). But with the arrival of Nero, Seneca quickly shifts roles and becomes mentor and blocking figure, firmly reproving the tyrant for his decision to murder Plautus and Sulla (437–8). Here is hardly the material of the satellite (and, as if to draw the distinction, Nero arrives with a stock satellite in tow). What would an audience make of such a character unless it already shared with the playwright a common tradition of the inner workings of the Neronian court and the relationship between Seneca and Nero that would have given the philosopher not only access to the tyrant but the license to contradict and correct him? Without making an appeal to what must have been the shared threads of historic narrative beyond the explicit details of the plot, it is difficult to account for a play that can offer such a shadowy presence at the imperial court, who can engage Nero so unabashedly in discussion of the purpose and limits of power and who then quits the scene so absolutely.

To assert the operation of threads of historic narrative shared between playwright and audience is, of course, to deny a pedagogical function to the incorporation of historical material into *Octavia*. The playwright is not composing history because the audience needs to know its history prior to the play. It has been keenly observed that *Octavia*'s playwright likely lived through the latter days of Nero's reign as a first person witness to the purges within the senate and imperial family and to popular reactions outside the palace in response

³⁴ It is significant that Seneca does not name the place of his exile in any of his writings (or make any nominal reference at all to Corsica, if Reynolds [1977] is correct at *Dial.* 12.6.4). Dio 60.85 is our next witness after *Octavia* to the place-name. See Whitman (1978) 79 *ad* 382.

³⁵ With the words *desiste . . . instare* ('cease pressing', 588–9), Nero may simultaneously be signalling an end to the exchange of arguments with Seneca and an end to the interview generally, cueing Seneca to leave. So performed, delivery of the rest of 589 (*liceat facere quod Seneca improbat*, 'let it be permissible to do what Seneca disallows') would serve as anthem for the new age of Seneca's fall from power.

to Nero's edicts.³⁶ But just as likely, so did the *Octavia's* audience. Such being the case, there is yet another reconstituted body in the play whose arrival on stage would present the audience with perhaps the drama's most disconcertingly recognisable and anguish inducing image. As we shall see, *Octavia's* chorus of Roman citizens would have confronted the audience with its own image from the recent past. How that image of the past served to reflect the present and the purpose of that confrontation of image will be explored below.

2. *Sunrise, Sunset; Sunrise, Sunset*

Octavia is dyadic. From its most superficial to its deepest structural organisation, the play is designed to break into opposing pairs.³⁷ The most obvious and overarching dyad is the plot structure that breaks the play into the events of two days. It is often claimed that, in terms of dramatic time, *Octavia's* plot spans three days, flouting the Aristotelian principle of unity of time.³⁸ It is true that markers of the passing of time are posted through the play: Octavia announces daybreak in her opening anapaests (1–4); at the end of this same day, Nero fixes the 'next day' (*proximum diem*, 592) for his wedding to Poppaea;³⁹ thereupon the ghost of Agrippina appears with a torch to haunt Poppaea's wedding (595–6);⁴⁰ the dawn of a new day finds

³⁶ Herington (1961) 29 and (1985) 530; Sutton (1983) 2; Kragelund (1988) 504–5.

³⁷ Symmetric composition observed by Schmidt (1985) 1448 and Wiseman (1998) 53.

³⁸ Three-day structure: Herington (1961) 21–2; Sutton (1983) 12–13, with reservations; Schmidt (1985) 1444–5; Junge (1999) 167. Flouting of unity of time: Herington (1961) 22–5; Junge (1999) 167–8.

³⁹ There is no reason that the dramatic time of the first choral ode or of Seneca's monologue (which begins 'Act Two' and prepares for the entrance of Nero) needs to be thought of as occurring immediately after the dramatic time of 'Act One'. Yet, lacking temporal cues signalling any break or discontinuity in time from the beginning of act 1 to the end of act 2, an audience would assume temporal continuity and take these events as happening on the same day.

⁴⁰ Chronology is established later in the text: Agrippina wields her torch—reminiscent of Virgil's Allecto, e.g., *Aen.* 7.456–9—for the explicit purpose of participating in Poppaea's wedding ceremony (595) that she might use her Hell's-fire to convert the wedding to a funeral rite (597). Poppaea, emerging from her bed-chamber on her first morning as Nero's wife (and following her wedding night), confirms that she has indeed been haunted by Agrippina, torch in hand (718–23). In performance, the emergence of Agrippina from Hell as a Fury (as she fancifully styles herself, 619), usually the dramatic stuff of prologues, would have served as a clear cue of a coming new day.

Octavia exiting the palace, setting foot into some place exterior (646–68),⁴¹ while, in counterbalance, Poppaea emerges from her inner chamber in the palace having just received a hellish dream vision during the previous night, that following her wedding day (690–718). The conclusion of the play concerns the political upheaval of the rest of this day.⁴²

Distribution of these events into a three-day structure misses the point.⁴³ As an audience attempts to construct a temporal sequence that can accommodate the major events of the narrative, it grows aware that the ‘wedding day’ of Nero and Poppaea—the day of the various ceremonial rites that would have ushered the bride from outside the palace’s threshold into Nero’s bedroom—this day has been spliced out of the sequence of events. It also grows aware that the dawn of the new day, the ‘second day’ (though it duplicates the dawn of the first day) is not continuous with the first day.⁴⁴ This discontinuity is, of course, strategic. As the seam between the first day of the drama and second widens into a gap of a day not represented (but only reported in glimpses and recollection), the function of the gap becomes clear. Time is resolved into the dyad of Before and After. Events of Octavia’s last day as Nero’s wife organise under the rubric, Before; events of Poppaea’s first day as Nero’s wife organise under the rubric, After. After duplicates (with variation on a theme) Before. Experientially, the juxtaposition of Before and After will impose upon the audience the need to evaluate days comparatively. Given that repetition is the drama’s essential rhythm,

⁴¹ Again, stage performance would have bolstered a temporal coherency that the reader must struggle to establish with forward and backward page-turning. That this is Octavia’s scene of liminal egress (explicitly indicated at 667) is immediately indicated in the text by her address of a group of supporters (*parcite lacrimis*, ‘spare your tears’, 646). That this scene is taking place at the moment of dawn following the wedding day is established by the chorus’ response to Octavia (*en illuxit . . . dies*, ‘lo, the day has dawned’, 669–70).

⁴² Given no cues signalling a break in dramatic time, an audience implicitly assumes temporal continuity. This day, which begins with Octavia predicting that it will bring an end to her cares even by death (652–3), ends with Octavia boarding a boat that will carry her off to her death (thematically established at 906–10; firmly asserted in Octavia’s parting lyrics, 958–71).

⁴³ It must be allowed that Agrippina’s ghost is haunting Poppaea on what is, technically, the late night of the (excluded) middle day and, consequentially, attempts to distribute the play’s scenes into a scheme of three days are not, technically speaking, utterly misguided.

⁴⁴ The audience hears about the wedding day rites from Agrippina (alluding to proceSSIONAL torches, 594–6) and, more fully, from Poppaea’s nurse (694–706).

the playwright would seem to making comparative analysis the core mechanism by which to understand the play.

Octavia, as we have already seen, opens with performative repetition in dual monologues. Octavia announces (in lyric anapaests) that she will be revisiting customary lamentations (*re-pete assuetos questus*, 'Return to your usual complaints', 6); in headline summary, her topics of complaint are her mother's misfortunes (10–17), her mother-in-law's cruelty (21–4), her father's demise (25–30) and her house's subjugation (31–2). Receiving most elaboration in this catalogue is Claudius, master of the world (26), conqueror of Britain, an ocean removed (27). Octavia's nurse, who has not heard a word of Octavia's performance from her place outside the bedroom, 'prologues' (in spoken *senarii*) a typically Senecan demonstration of the calamities that beset the Great Household. And in this catalogue she touches upon Claudius, who mastered the world (38–9), whom Ocean obeyed (40), and who conquered Britain (41).

The very purpose of this doubling of image, theme and opinion is then made clear. Octavia emerges from her bedroom and is engaged in dialogue by her nurse. The nurse modulates into anapaests to harmonise with Octavia. But Octavia is looking for more than harmony, she asks her nurse to take up her lacrimation and play the *testis nostri fida doloris* ('faithful witness of my pain', 76). The nurse, out of Octavia's presence and in soliloquy, has already proved her ability to replicate and re-present Octavia's primary performance. The audience has a way of judging her performance when she comes into Octavia's presence for it has witnessed the nurse in soliloquy.

Octavia's largest scheme of duplication furnishes the audience with a frame by which critical comparison becomes inevitable. As can be gathered in the play's smaller schemes, critical comparison is often achieved simply by checking the consistency of inward and outward expression (both facial and verbal), the consistency of expression on one day and then another, or even the consistency of advice and action. The scene between Octavia and her nurse will be re-staged in a scene of the second day, the second time matching Poppaea with her own nurse. When replayed, the audience cannot help but assess difference: Poppaea's nurse will enact no proofs of her faithfulness to her mistress and her words of advice will ring outlandishly false. For a history play, forward progress in time counts for little in *Octavia*; it is only through the doubling back of events that an audience may gain ground and perspective.

3A. *A Brief Herstory of Time: Octavia and Chorus*

Octavia is, to be sure, a history drama. It is peopled by characters at pains to set history down right. We have seen Octavia's interest in establishing her nurse as a reliable witness to the reality of her suffering. Octavia's deeper historical sense arises in her rivalling her misfortunes with those of Athens's royal line (8). She begins the competition invoking her mother as *prima meorum causa malorum* ('first cause of my evils', 11). Her lamentation, appropriately enough, traces the chain of causation from her mother's death (102) to the death of Britannicus and her current state of subjugation, a victor's spoils in a conquered house (125–33). One waits for elaboration upon the *prima causa* ('first cause') theme; when Octavia does elaborate, she is correcting her nurse's historic perspective. The nurse argues that Claudius' incestuous marriage to Agrippina marks the beginning of the evils and accounts for all subsequent crimes (*hinc orta series facinorum*, 'hence arose the sequence of crimes', 143). In tracing causes, the nurse connects the history of the house to a cosmic narrative of the interplay of good and evil. Agrippina's crimes against Claudius' family have routed *sancta Pietas* ('holy Piety', 160) from the house and brought in an *Erinys saeva* ('savage Fury', 161) to fill the void of the *uacuum aulam* ('empty palace', 161–2). Octavia is happy to read history on a cosmic scale, but her *prima causa* antedates Agrippina.

Octavia's narrative of the fall of her house, when she does finally render it to the nurse, is distinctively Roman in its grand historic perspective. It is a narrative of Virgilian scale, beginning from the 'wrath of the gods' (*gravi deorum ira*, 257–8). Venus, *prima genetrix* ('first begetter') of Rome, enters into the stream of Roman history yet again and causes Octavia's own *genetrix* to confound the legitimacy of Claudius' children. Messalina's doubling of the wedding rite (*nupta . . . nupsit*, 'already married, she married', 260) makes dubious Octavia's status as *Claudia proles* ('the offspring of Claudius'), as it does Britannicus' status as a Claudius. It also renders dubious the nurse's formulation of a future history in which Nero might forswear the Venusian charms of his current mistress and succumb to the attractions of an enduring, Junonian relationship with Octavia (201–21). As Nero will demonstrate mid-play, Juno may be the goddess of marriage, childbirth and domestic bliss, but Venus promotes pregnancy (591–2).

Nero's need for Octavia is, as Octavia well knows (249–51), predicated upon her ability to legitimate his claim that a Domitius might also be a Caesar. Octavia, as the citizen body of the chorus concisely formulates it, is Rome's best chance for continuity and tranquillity: *edat partu pignora pacis* ('may she produce in pregnancy pledges of peace', 279). The anxiety of the chorus, the motivation behind the music, is the alternative to those pledges of peace. With what legitimacy might Nero stake his own claim to power if engaged in the dissolution of the Claudian house? The chorus compares the possibility of Nero's divorce from Octavia to the crises posed by the assaults of Tarquinius upon Lucretia and Appius upon Virginia (291–308). The sexual conduct of the overweening rulers from the early days of Rome had exploded into the political reaction of the 'true stock of Mars' (*uerumque genus Martis*, 292–3). It would become incumbent upon the chorus then to incorporate itself with those great Roman citizens who had expelled the tyrants of old, to double the course of Roman history, and to turn yet another crisis of private assault into a public expression of manhood: war follows the victimisation of the innocent girl (300).⁴⁵

Nero's claim to *auctoritas* ('legitimate authority'), if he is to put down the choral criticism, hinges upon his ability to illegitimate Octavia's claim to Claudius. His repudiation of her will signal as much (533–6); his condemnation of Octavia makes her Messalina's daughter, encoded with Messalina's sin. The chorus of Roman citizens, on the other hand, works vigorously in its first ode to portray Nero as his mother's son. Their fascination with Agrippina, which produces the sustained, vivid narrative of her demise at sea (309–76), begins from their analogy of the transgressive behaviour of Tullia, daughter of Servius Tullius, wife of Tarquinius (305–8). As Tullia was a king-maker through her assault on her own father, so Agrippina's treatment of Claudius and Britannicus—by her own piteous admission while going down at sea (340–2)—reveals her as a shameless powerbroker involved in secretive crimes for her son. The casting of the shipwreck on the 'Etruscan Sea' (*Tyrrhenum aequor*, 311–13)

⁴⁵ See Whitman (1978) *ad* 301 for the referencing of Lucretia (and the ensuing civil wars that result from her rape). The *bellum secutum* theme and the play's mythological allusions to coming war is explored below, sec. 6.

evocatively links Agrippina to the Etruscan queen of old. While the chorus claims that the purpose of its tale of Agrippina's murder is to highlight the great sin of a son in its own age (309–10), the tale simultaneously highlights Agrippina's encodation of Nero with her own sins:

hac sum, fateor, digna carina,
 quae te genui, quae tibi lucem
 atque imperium nomenque dedi
 Caesaris amens.

([Seneca], *Octavia* 334–7)

I confess I deserve this boat—
 I, who begot you, who gave you light
 and then, out of my mind, gave you power and
 The name of Caesar.

This choral recounting of Agrippina's confession of her own crimes exposes Nero for the usurping tyrant that he is: his spurious claim to the name of Caesar is a maternal inheritance, transmitted by her hidden machinations.

Inasmuch as Nero is his mother's son, so also is Octavia, from the chorus' point of view, her father's daughter. Nero's repudiation of Octavia, as the chorus decries, forces her from her *patria aula* ('father's palace', 285); the expulsion from her own home sanctifies her, restores her to her pre-marriage condition. The chorus speaks, in present tenses, of her *sancta pietas* ('holy devotion', 286), a filial devotion that indexes the girl's worth in terms of the social position of the father (even a 'divine father', *diuusque pater*, 286), *uirginitas* ('virginity') and *castus pudor* ('chaste honour', 287). It is not at all clear that Nero and Octavia have consummated their marriage, that Octavia has become his wife.

Not that it matters. A key project undertaken in the poetry of this history drama is to set the clock back on public and private histories, transforming Octavia into a *uirgo intacta* ('chaste virgin'), an imperial Virginia; but just as important, the playwright works to transform her from virginal victim who must flee Rome (and bring the history of her household to its close) into the archetypal Virgo who flees Earth at the close of pre-history as a *deterior aetas* ('worse era', 417) begins.

3B. *A Brief Mythstory of Time: Seneca*

Enter Seneca. In a structural technique of dramatic composition cribbed from Seneca's best work, the playwright blocks the first act and choral ode as metonymic panel, the part standing for the whole, a micro-drama establishing the major themes of the play (cf. *Tro.* 1–163; *Phaed.* 1–273; *Thy.* 1–121). Seneca opens act 2 of *Octavia* with a monologue that is, for all practical purposes, the play's second prologue. It is the prologue for the other part of the imperial palace, the men's part. It is also another accounting of time. Like Octavia's accounting of history, Seneca's comes packaged into the fragments of his own personal history. Seneca's history is easy to tell: a blissful period of exile on Corsica, followed by the uncertainty of life at the very heart of power in Rome. On Corsica, Seneca had been able to indulge his days in pursuit of natural questions (382–4). And his chief object of investigation and inquiry, of *historia*, was, he tells us, the *opus immensum* ('immense work', 386) that Nature has made. The world, in Seneca's estimation, is both offspring and artistic product of Nature.⁴⁶ Yet Seneca's particular obsessions in inquiry have all to do with the marking of time. Seneca, it seems, uses exile as a chance to hone the arts of astronomy: the motions of the sun, the spin of the globe, the conjunction of the lunar with the solar cycle (385–90). Removed from human contact, Seneca focuses upon the cosmic. And the history he discovers there metaphorically duplicates the imperial history that Octavia and the chorus have chronicled in the opening acts and odes of the play.

For Seneca's cosmos is, not surprisingly, cataclysmic. The Stoic-in-exile has deduced the likelihood of imminent *ecpyrosis* and awaits the apocryphal last day (392–3). The fall of the world is itself iterative (*iterum*, 'again', 392): the destruction of the old world promises the regeneration of a better world (395), which might in turn beget a new human line (394–5). The world, in Seneca's formulation, returns to a golden, Saturnian age characterised by the rule of the Virgin. Such was the world then when virgin Justice and her trusty sidekick, Fides (398, recalling Octavia's salutation of her nurse, 76), held sway on earth and Earth herself (404), fecund mother of all,

⁴⁶ Cf. Seneca's description of Nature: *parens* ('parent', 385), *genuit* ('created', 386), *artifex* ('artisan', 386).

generously nourished her pious offspring. It was a woman's world then: the virgin seated in power politically, the mother seated in power domestically. But that was then.⁴⁷

Seneca's cosmic teleology accords, of course, with the historiography already offered in the first ode of the chorus and its tracking of socio-political de- and re- generation at Rome. And it is difficult not to gloss imperial history (as the first choral ode has just provided it) with Senecan teleology. The world has, after all, devolved through human generations to the point when offspring turn on Mother Earth (416–18). The fallen age is characterised by humans who penetrate Earth's innards (416), extricate iron and gold (417–18), and then arm their savage hands (418).

This encapsulation of universal time recalls the elaborately detailed *dies supremus* in the annals of Roman history that the chorus has just recorded: Agrippina, drowning in the first attempt of her son to kill her by the rouse of the booby-trapped ship, is rescued thanks to the *fides* that remains in the breasts of her subjects who have survived the catastrophe (351–2); Agrippina's loyalists employ their hands rescuing her (354–5). But Nero 'doubles' (*geminat*, 363) the assault, this time resorting to *ferrum* ('iron', 'the sword', 358). To the minion of Nero sent to dispatch her, Agrippina offers her womb that he might bury the sword (370). Agrippina casts herself as a Jocasta, to be sure.⁴⁸ But just as important, Seneca recasts this Oedipal scene from Roman history into a cosmic event whose significance has global consequence. With the impious violation of Mother Earth, Seneca recounts in his universal history, the heavenly virgin flees.

Such is where Senecan time stands. In his own time, sins are doubled upon the heads of his contemporaries (429–30). The crush of his own, grave era (430) promises the ensuing crush of the final day (392–3) and the regeneration of a new race (395). Though in exile, the astral virgin will return; another Saturnian age waits in the future.

⁴⁷ See Sutton (1983) 63–4 for the ironic recycling of golden age iconography in the poetry of Nero's court.

⁴⁸ Agrippina's murder replays Jocasta's sexual suicide in Seneca's *Oedipus* 1036–9. See Williams (1994) 179–80; Boyle (1997) 101–2.

3C. *An Imperial History of Crime: Nero*

But not on Nero's watch. The emperor enters engaged in the business of the fallen age. Seneca breaks off his monologue to signal the approach of the ruler and the audience is allowed to hear the bottom line of imperial business: Nero commands the execution of two of his relatives in exile, Plautus and Sulla (436–7).⁴⁹ Seneca's preoccupation with the historic operations of the *deterior aetas* ('worse era', 417) soon readjusts to Nero's imperial operations 'at his current age' (*aetate in hac*, 447).⁵⁰ Given four years of preliminary instruction from Seneca and another eight years of on the job training, Nero is probably correct in his self assessment of having attained *satis consilii* ('sufficient reasoning ability', 447). Nero exhibits several competencies in his protracted interview with Seneca. Considering who his teacher has been, the tyrant has learned his lessons well.

Nero knows his Seneca. Engaging Nero to express disapproval of the decision to kill Plautus and Sulla, Seneca moves to summary arguments of *De Clementia* and *De Ira*.⁵¹ Such arguments are little more than a nuisance to Nero. Senecan idealism collapses before Neronian pragmatism. The tyrant speaks in a language of power that does not blush to expose underlying motive and desire for power. Seneca twice (*Octavia* 448, 461) counters Nero's positions with limp prayers to avert Nero's intentions. Nero is completely unimpressed with the appeals to rational restraint cribbed from the *Dialogi*. Much more influential on his line of reasoning have been the tragedies. Nero cribs from only the best: Lycus, Atreus, Eteocles.

Nero also knows his imperial history and cribs from only the best there as well. In his protracted defences of his methods and aims, Nero moves with ease from the general propositions of ruling by fear, loathing and *Macht* to the particulars of the *exempla* of Iulius and Augustus Caesar. Augustus was deified, Seneca argues, in so far as he lived up to his title, 'parent of the fatherland' (*parens patriae*,

⁴⁹ The playwright offers the audience no more than cognominal identification of Plautus and Sulla (though Seneca characterises them as Nero's *propinquos*, 'close relatives', 440) and gives Nero no explicit motivation for the murders beyond his suspicion and fear. For familial relationship see Whitman (1978) 84 *ad* 438–9.

⁵⁰ Claudius died on 13 October 54 CE, two months before Nero's seventeenth birthday on 8 December. Given that the events of the play are set in June 62 CE, the playwright is imagining Nero as a twenty-four year old.

⁵¹ Hosius (1922) 34–5.

Oct. 477–8); the same title, along with ‘author of peace’ (*pacis auctor*, 488) and ‘judge of the human race’ (*generis humani arbiter*, 488) have been offered Nero by the senate and People of Rome. Seneca suggests that a duplication of Augustan rule is in order. And Nero agrees: Iulius Caesar had made the mistake of sparing Brutus (498–9). The ‘breaker of nations’ (*gentium domitor*, 500) fell murdered by the crime of citizens (502). Augustus made no such mistake. Augustus Caesar ruled by senatorial purges, proscription, civil war and a sustained domestic policy of terror and fear. He enshrined his ‘father’ and was duly enshrined himself. Such was Tiberius’ ‘outstanding piety’ (*pietate . . . eximia*, 528). Nero knows the *cursus* he must follow: deify your predecessor, rule by raw force of power, have your successor deify you. He has completed the first third of the *cursus* (449); his entry lines, which Seneca have overheard (437–8), signal the second leg of the tripos well begun; Nero’s sticking point is his lack of progeny. The lessons of imperial history have given Nero a clear directive. With the bloody effects of his power reaching to those exiled on the fringes of the empire, the tyrant must turn to the management of his *domus*. Roman power now must make an internal inventory and assessment.

4. *Welcome to the Hotel Transitoria*

Octavia is, above all else, a bedroom drama, and an imperial bedroom drama at that. Among the ancient dramatic texts preserved to us, it is the first to cast actions clearly unfolding in an interior space.⁵²

⁵² Ballaira (evidenced by Herington [1977] 278–9) observes the necessity of representing both an interior scene (at lines 1–33) and (at line 820) a scene exterior to the palace. Herington, perplexed that ‘the *Octavia* would thus become the only known ancient drama set in the interior of a building’, overlooks Aristophanes’ *Clouds* (e.g., 184–509, a scene that, at very least, is to be imagined taking place inside the courtyard of an Athenian house). Arguing from the symmetric blocking of the play’s scenes, Wiseman (1998) 53, without claiming that any scene is interior, believes the text ‘was clearly written for a fully developed Roman *scaena frons* with three doors—Octavia’s quarters on one side, Poppaea’s on the other, and the “royal door” (from which Nero and the Prefect emerge at line 437) in the middle’. While the argument of three doors is moot, it is surely correct to argue that Poppaea’s interview with her nurse (690–714)—taking place immediately outside Poppaea and Nero’s bridal chamber (and so still interior to the palace)—strengthens the claim that Octavia’s interview with her nurse occurs immediately outside Octavia’s bedchamber, perhaps under an open sky (e.g., 1–4), but certainly not outside of the palace.

Seneca's *cothurnatae*, with rare and qualified exception, preserve the pristine Athenian scenic convention that all actions mimetically represented are to be imagined occurring in an exterior space.⁵³

Octavia begins from the inside. Its protagonist sings her opening monody in utter isolation, within her chamber, within the imperial palace, within Rome. The central action of the play is Octavia's displacement and expulsion from her chamber, from the palace, and from Rome. This movement is formally counterbalanced by the insertion of Octavia's replacement and rival, Poppaea Sabina, into the Roman public sphere, into the palace, and into the imperial bedroom. Space is plainly being polarised in this scenic construct. Interior space is, obviously enough, the private sphere where sexual union is anticipated and wished for. Oddly though, anticipation and wishes for felicitous coupling in bed are precisely what bind the exterior sphere to the interior. The major premise of the nurse's attempts at solacing Octavia is that Nero can be gratified physically and that a pregnancy would ensure her survival and her family's bloodline (177–80). Not unusual advice from a nurse, perhaps. Yet the opening lines of the chorus' first ode reveal that there is a comprehensive sense beyond the walls of the palace that the social compact granting the right to rule Rome is based on the expectation of the propagation of the Claudian house. The chorus lays out, in its first choral ode, a political theory that elevates the substance of bedroom rumour to the level of national welfare. Pregnancy will preserve Rome's ruling house. Social stability is guaranteed by marital consummation: coitus will provide continuity from past into the future. The converse, of course, forebodes disruption and upheaval. Nero's replacement of Octavia with another woman in the bed is a political crisis that threatens the very security of the world, which is to say that the violation of Octavia's private realm, the entrance of Poppaea into her bedroom, has the makings of a very public tragedy.

To view and scrutinise these dual movements inward and outward, the playwright has bestowed on his audience the power to penetrate walls with its gaze. And the playwright is keen to demonstrate from the outset that the audience's gaze is privileged; it can

⁵³ The *convivium* ('banquet scene') of *Thyestes* (centrepiece of act 5, 885–1112) seems to be held in a place interior to Atreus' palace; but it is a vaguely defined space, roofless, from where Thyestes also has a view of the heavens (see at 990–5). See Tarrant (1985) 219 *ad* 903–7.

hear and see Octavia before her nurse can and is in a position to weigh and judge matched speeches delivered as soliloquies. At the midpoint of the play, the audience's privileged gaze widens to include even the vision of Agrippina's ghost on her way to infect Poppaea's bridal chamber (593–7). The poet does not invite the audience into this inner chamber, but gives it a vision all the same of the interior: when Poppaea bursts from within out to the antechamber to meet her own nurse (690), the audience is given descriptive access not only to Poppaea's bed, but to the very substance of the new bride's nightmares. In Poppaea's dream vision, she sees that her bedroom has not only been visited by Agrippina (722–3) but thronged by mourning *matres Latinae* ('Latin mothers', 718–20).

For a play that so carefully constructs walled spaces, hedging and hemming its characters like prisoners, the ease and frequency of penetration into these recesses by visitations from without is remarkable. The *matres Latinae* who in the ordinary celebration of the wedding night would be stationed outside the bedroom doors to rouse the couple inside with epithalamia, cross into quite a different ritual strain when they move into the bedroom and perform a lamentation at the bier. And thus the wedding *torus*, a private couch, kept from view in the bedroom, becomes the vehicle of conveyance to the funeral pile.

The theme of the dream-vision of penetration is established by Octavia in describing to her nurse her recurrent nightmare of Britannicus taking refuge with her (115–24). The image is startling and obviously designed to control the first half of the play. The would-be Electra cannot shelter the avenging Orestes and the nightmare shocks three times: Britannicus penetrates Octavia's bedroom, Nero penetrates in hot pursuit, and Nero's sword penetrates the brother and sister simultaneously. When, by the middle of the drama, Poppaea herself has penetrated Octavia's bedroom and displaced her on Nero's couch, the audience will come to find that Octavia's nightmare has become Poppaea's. So it hardly surprises that Octavia views her departure from the palace (a processional in anapaests, 646–69) as a liberation from marital and sexual oppression (654–9). But her very departure makes her a sexual victim of another sort (*hos ad thalamos seruata diu/uictima*, 'spared to be a sacrificial victim to this marriage', 663–4—recalling *in luctus seruata meos*, 'reserved for my miseries', 70).

When Octavia crosses the threshold of the palace to the world outside, she immediately comes into contact with the chorus, which throughout the play has been hovering on the fringes, absorbing and responding to the various palace rumours that reach its ears. From outside the palace the chorus has been suffering its own species of oppression and exclusion:

cessit thalamis Claudia diri
 pulsa Neronis,
 quos iam uictrix Poppaea tenet,
 cessat pietas dum nostra graui
 compressa metu segnisque dolor.

([Seneca], *Octavia* 671–5)

Claudia [Octavia] has resigned,
 Expelled from grim Nero's bedroom,
 Which triumphant Poppaea now owns,
 While our loyalty, oppressed by
 Weighty fear, idles and our anguish sluggish.

But not sluggish for long. The chorus begins a second movement of penetration directed at the palace. Counterbalancing Octavia's moment of departure—*linque cruentam principis aulam* ('quit the cruel palace of the princeps', 668)—it turns out, will be a citizen movement against Poppaea and Nero—*uiolenta manus petat . . . principis aulam* ('let violent hand attack the palace of the princeps', 685–9). Political and sexual aggression will coalesce in violence; the citizen body fantasises that its assault on the palace will allow it not only to lay violent hands on the *imago* of Poppaea (683–4), but even to pull the empress herself down from her marriage couch (*ipsamque toris detrahat altis*, 'let [the violent mob] pull Poppaea herself down from her towering couch', 685–7).

As violence begins to erupt in the second portion of the play, we find in the text a growing confusion between the imagery of marriage and sex, on the one hand, and the mechanics of political upheaval and revolution, on the other. In a brilliant stroke of paratatic scene shifting, the playwright chooses to move from a citizen mob arming itself against Nero and Poppaea inside the palace to the scene of Poppaea's wedding-night nightmare described above. There the audience is given Poppaea, roused from sleep by fear, but a fear having nothing to do (it seems) with the upheaval outside. Yet for an audience who knows the desires of the citizen body outside

the palace, Poppaea's chambers will feel threatened. When her nurse tries to soothe Poppaea's as yet unarticulated fears (690–711), small comfort (from the audience's perspective) to hear of the striking image that Poppaea made as she was exhibited through the marriage ceremonies on her 'towering couch' (*altos toros*, 698). Here is the very target of the mob's outrage. The inner terrors brought on by Agrippina and the phantoms of the underworld co-mingle, in the audience's mind, with the terrors of the impinging riots from outside.

5. *Herstrionics: Faking it for the Tyrant*

Octavia is a study in fear. Those without power fear the powerful; those with power fear the powerless. The simple scheme of the playwright in his compositional method is to pair his characters into relationships of power. The pervasiveness of fear felt and projected by the characters of this play is achieved through the coupling and confrontation of weak and strong. With the possible exception of Agrippina, no character endures on the stage unattended or unengaged by a second character.⁵⁴ And no character is allowed a peer. All are gridded into a hierarchy of service (that is, *seruitus*) from nurse to emperor. Here is a world without the possibility of *concordia*, of *amici-tia*, of equally yoked mates. Nurse serves mistress; teacher serves student; Rome serves emperor; emperor serves himself. And fear drives all service.

Nero succinctly summarises the dynamics of power and its chief consequence:

Munus deorum est, ipsa quod seruit mihi
 Roma et senatus quodque ab inuitis preces
 humilesque uoces exprimit nostri metus.
 seruare ciues principi et patriae graues,
 claro tumentes genere quae dementia est,
 cum liceat una uoce suspectos sibi
 mori iubere?

([Seneca], *Octavia* 492–8)

⁵⁴ Even Agrippina is being goaded by Claudius who has the ability to torment her from his seat in the underworld (614–18). And, reading backwards from Poppaea's description of Agrippina in her wedding night dream vision (718–23), Agrippina enters Nero and Poppaea's bedroom attended by a throng of mourning *matres Latinae* ('Latin mothers', 720).

It is a gift of the gods that Rome herself
 And the senate serve me and that fear of me
 Forces prayers and humble expressions from unwilling subjects.
 To protect citizens, puffed up in their noble lineage,
 Burdensome to Chief and Fatherland—it's madness
 When it's possible with one word to order one's
 Enemies to die!

Here is a social compact of fear pressuring words and prayers, and fear exuding from words and prayers. The tyrant takes it as a given that there can be no sincerity of word (to say nothing of action) under his regime. But what need has Nero of sincerity? Provided he is able to see the hypocrisy in the faces of his subjects and hear it in their words, he can maintain an efficient economy of speech where any pretence to power can be exchanged for the simple syllables of condemnation.

Insincerity is everywhere in *Octavia*. Consider in light of Nero's expectation of subservient speech the duplicitous advice of Octavia's nurse as she urges insincere action and word for its expedience and safety:

Animi retine uerba furentis,
 temere emissam comprime uocem.

([Seneca], *Octavia* 98–9)

Hold back the words of a raging mind,
 Suppress speech rashly uttered.

For Octavia, oral suppression complicates matters: suppressing her voice and complying with the tyrant opens her up to his approach. Her deeper struggle is the vulgar thought of gazing upon Nero's puffed-up face and locking lips with the enemy. One form of oppression leads directly to another.

Octavia is also a study in the repression of fear. Characters of inferior status repeatedly give advice to their superiors to squelch fear and anxiety. So the nurse to Octavia; Seneca to Nero; the nurse to Poppaea; the prefect to Nero. In the case of the advice that Seneca and, later, the prefect give to Nero, the emphasis is on the repression of aggressive actions motivated by fear. But in the cases of the advice lent to Octavia and Poppaea by their nurses, the emphasis falls decidedly on repression of speech. The same verb complex, *primere*, *pressi*, *pressus*, used of sexual and political oppression, surfaces in the injunction to hold one's lips closed.

The pressure exerted upon the lips has a secondary effect that the playwright is keen to expose. To return again to Poppaea and her revelation of her wedding night dream, the audience is permitted to observe a subservient character offering a reading of the evil omens in a highly suspect interpretative scheme. The nurse glosses each element of Poppaea's dream in fantastically myopic terms: it's quite natural to be dreaming of one's 'husband' on the wedding night (742–4), the plangent lamentation of the throng (718–20) represents applause at the departure of Octavia (746), the torch of Agrippina promises children (749–50), the scenic backdrop of Hell signifies a secure future for the family line (750–1), Nero's assault with a sword plainly shows there will be a cessation of wars (752–3). *Re-collige animum, re-cipe laetitiam . . . red-de te thalamis tuis* ('Recollect yourself; recover your joy; return to your bedroom', 754–5). The nurse is manic in her insistence that Poppaea have no fear (755) and that she either disregard the dream-vision presented to her or regard it in the most preposterous terms of interpretation. Poppaea does not disregard the vision of her dream and takes actions to avert its omen; but her resolve to supplicate the gods 'that the current state of affairs remain' (*maneant ut praesens status*, 761) is an equally dubious response to the vision. The audience, unless it chooses to disregard or misread the spectacle it is being presented, must understand, in the change of *status* that has swept Octavia out and Poppaea in (to say nothing of its extra-textual knowledge of the fate of Poppaea), the vanity of such prayers.

6. *Spanning Mythic and Historic Realities*

Octavia is simultaneously about marriage and divorce, faithfulness and faithlessness, chastity and promiscuity, *fauor* and *furor*. Not surprisingly, the hallmark of the play's thematic structure is the often perplexing conjunctions and disjunctions of scene arrangement, character couplings and figurative symbols in its network of poetic language. Immediately following Poppaea's interview scene with her nurse, the chorus of citizens reappears, speaking, as ever, of the 'buzzing rumour' (*loquax fama* 762; cf. 273, 670) that has again roused it to song. Aware that the chorus has been outside the palace, preparing a revolt against Poppaea and Nero, gathering material and tools to attack the palace (685–9), the audience would be expecting revolution to break out

with the transference of scene. Expectation is baffled. Rather than the fire brands and pillaging promised by the chorus in its previous ode, the audience is given, for the play's third choral ode (762–9), the poetic material of epithalamium. Poppaea, the new fixation of the chorus, is painted into a mythological fantasy in which she keeps company with Leda, Europa, Danaë and Helen herself (764–77). When a messenger appears, certifying through his narrative that a citizen body has in fact been busy shattering the *imagines* of Poppaea (794–9) and preparing war on the palace (780–1, 801–3), it becomes abundantly clear that this pro-Poppaeian citizen body constitutes a second chorus.

This dramatic technique is not at issue.⁵⁵ What perplexes the modern reader is that this second chorus shares corporate identity with the first.⁵⁶ Whether the audience is to understand that the citizens of the chorus have been bifurcated into semi-factions or that a separate pro-Poppaeian assemblage gathers separately from the pro-Octavians, the chorus continues to represent Roman citizens.⁵⁷ Although this chorus will plainly distinguish itself from the pro-Octavian faction by rebuking it (806, 808, 811–12, all in the second person, plural) for the uselessness of their violent 'wars' (806), it is equally plain that this second chorus is restrained by its fear (e.g., 818). Nero's designs upon the furious citizens surrounding the palace involve instilling compliance through fear (842–3). When the chorus appears again in the exodus, singing of the curse of the *fauor populi* ('favour of the people', 877–8), it is impossible to tell whether it is referring to its own *fauor* or to the *fauor* of the citizens who have attacked the palace (that is, whether the final chorus presented is the same as the chorus of the first two odes [273–376, 669–89] or the second two [762–79, 806–19]). This indeterminacy strongly suggests that Nero's campaign of fear effectively suppresses citizen opposition and that all fear him equally. However the choral factions are to be understood, by the end of the play there is but one chorus.

⁵⁵ Senecan tragedy (e.g., *Ag.* 589–781) offered *Octavia's* playwright the precedent for the dramatic technique of the auxiliary or second chorus. Cf. also, e.g., [Sen.] *Her.* [O.] 104–72, 225–32.

⁵⁶ Thus the attempt of Sutton (1983) 14 to argue for a single chorus.

⁵⁷ In a play about the suppression of words and actions due to fear of the powerful, a single chorus (one that reproves itself for its fearful inaction) could easily be portrayed shifting its allegiances. Yet the playwright has plainly scripted the pro-Poppaeian choral odes in a setting distinct from the sites of the anti-Poppaeian mob activity.

Rome's choral citizens, regardless of their allegiance, draw upon a narrow reserve of poetic image and mythic exempla: the wedding imagery of this third choral ode (762–79) duplicates the imagery of the first choral ode (273–376). Far more disconcerting than the chorus' shifted allegiance from Octavia to Poppaea is the corresponding shift in sympathetic representation within the choral lyrics from Juno to the *paelices* ('mistresses') of Jupiter. The play's controlling iconic image of the marriage of Jupiter and Juno (repeatedly offered by Octavia's nurse and the chorus at the outset of the play), an image of eternal wedded bliss and, more to the point, of lasting imperial peace, is shattered. The machinations of Cupid (807–19) guarantee that Jupiter will stray, that Venus will be favoured over Juno, that Troy must fall again. As goes the mythology of Jupiter and Juno's wedding, so goes the stability of peace in the empire. The broken marriage vows of Jupiter and the rehearsal of his sexual conquests catalogued by the chorus (762–77) point toward the inevitable coming of war. Poppaea's nurse signals such an ominous connection between Nero's union with Poppaea and the necessity of war. Her comparison between the wedding rites of Poppaea and those of Thetis (707) can hardly be construed in any other way.

With ever increasing foreboding *Octavia's* mythological imagery signals catastrophic war waiting in 'the future'. Octavia's nurse had, in her arguments to convince Octavia not to abandon hope in her marriage, constructed the analogy between Juno and Octavia (201–21). In the nurse's formulation, though Juno had suffered through Jupiter's rapes of various mortal women, the completion of the myth ensures Jupiter's return to his proper place. Juno's mythological calamities come to rest in an enduring present tense security and stability: *sola Tonantem tenet aethero/secure toro maxima Iuno* ('Secure in her ethereal bed, Juno, greatest of all, alone retains the Thunderer', 215–16). Octavia need only play a 'second Juno on earth' (*terris altera Iuno*, 219) and await the future.

But the nurse's argument, as the odes will demonstrate in the second half of the play, operates upon the excluded middle of the narrative. Octavia's nurse catalogues Leda, Europa, Danaë, Semele and Alcmene as Juno's 'unsuccessful' rivals for Jupiter. The choral wedding song on the beauty of Poppaea (762–79) revisits the nurse's catalogue for material to construct a mythological analogy for the 'success' of Poppaea at capturing Nero: Leda, Europa, Danaë had

all brought Jupiter down from the stars (762–72). Poppaea's beauty not only outshines theirs, but even Helen's:

Formam Sparte iacet alumnae
licet et Phrygius praemia pastor,
uincet uultus haec Tyndaridos,
qui mouerunt horrida bella
Phrygiaeque solo regna dedere.

([Seneca], *Octavia* 773–7)

Sparta may boast her Helen's
Beauty, the Phrygian shepherd
May boast his judgement prize;
This woman will best Tyndarid Helen's looks,
Which launched dreadful wars
And levelled Phrygia's kingdom.

The Roman addendum to this epic material of the razing of the Phrygian kingdom extends Juno's mindful *ira* well beyond Helen's stay in Troy. Troy must fall and rise again before the nurse's formulation of a triumphant Juno can reach its narrative conclusion. The nurse's advice that Octavia play the role of an *altera Iuno*, as it turns out, opens parts for another Venus, another Priam, another Hector, another Achilles.

The chorus, so willing to attribute Nero's weakness for the beauty of Poppaea to the overwhelming power of Cupid (806–7), cannot repress its fear over the inevitable coming of a violence far greater than that offered by the citizen body storming the palace. Cupid will overwhelm their 'fires' (*ignes*) with 'flames' (*flammi*s, 808). In language that precisely recalls Seneca's anxieties over Nero's ongoing machinations to obliterate potential rivals, the chorus bristles with anxiety over what the unsparing violence of Cupid may bring next (818–19).

Nero will be the vehicle of that violence; his abrupt re-entry into the play jars against the chorus' mythological landscape of Argos and Troy, scenes of Cupid's prior devastation (816–17). Nero's new set of orders to his prefect threatens a very real devastation for Rome and its people (831–3). His objective in laying waste to Rome is the utter subjection of the people; he rages at the thought of his subjects daring to raise a glance to the face of his new wife (840–1) and expects, by deployment of the fear tactics he has laid out in his exchanges with Seneca, obedience at his very nod (842–3). Seneca

had claimed (484) that at Nero's nod Fortune subjugates lands and seas. But that nod has already drawn from Octavia a refusal to submit. In ordering the banishment and execution of Octavia at this juncture (861), Nero effectively moves the Roman people into the vacancy created by Octavia's removal. The compliance he could not elicit from his wife he will demand from the people; broken in fear, the *plebs* will learn to obey the nod of Nero (842–3).

It is open to the audience to read *Octavia's* representation of a popular uprising against Poppaea as the historical moment that caused Nero to take back Octavia, momentarily forestalling his divorce and remarriage. Tacitus might well have read the play in such terms.⁵⁸ But to understand the play only as the representation of a fixed historical moment is to ignore the mythological indicators warning away from such facile equivalencies. The operations of history and mythology each vie to assert a proper interpretative frame by which to read the exile from Rome of an innocent girl. While the beginning of the play offers models of consonance between history and mythology—Octavia fashioning herself a latter day Electra (57–69) or the nurse fashioning her an earthly Juno (219–21)—the play's conclusion offers history and mythology radically diverging. The moment of Octavia's exile and looming execution cues a conclusion to the material of the historic narrative: the family line of Claudius is extinguished. But the material of the mythical narrative opens expansively.

The play's exodus functions as dirge for Octavia while she is escorted to exile and execution (874–6); but the dirge also includes lamentation for the fall of popular leaders of the last phase of the republic (the Gracchi, 882–7 and Livius Drusus, 888–9), as well as lamentation for the victimised women of the Julio-Claudian house (the elder Agrippina, 932–40, Iulia Livilla, 941–3, her daughter, Iulia, 944–6, Messalina, 947–51). While the chorus is lyrically constructing a historic context into which Octavia's tragedy may be inserted, Octavia herself is busy constructing a mythological context into which she may retreat. She sings a classic 'escape ode', wishing for the wings of a bird that she might fly the scene (917–20). But history asserts itself: Octavia can see that her boat duplicates the bark that

⁵⁸ Whitman (1978) 124–5 *ad* 924 documents Tacitus' 'remarkable' importation into *Annales* 14.63 of a catalogue of persecuted imperial women to compare with Octavia at her exile. See Ferri (1998) 355–6.

had taken Agrippina to her death (907–11). Birds and ships: the imagery returns us to Octavia's prologue from the first morning.

The generic pathos of the tragic escape ode, the literary complexities of the mythology of the Trojan war, the intertextual allusion to Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* and *Helen*, the conjuring of republican martyrs such as the Gracchi and Livius Drusus (perhaps in the tradition of republican *fabulae praetextae*),⁵⁹ the rehearsing of the female victims of Julio-Claudian politics: *Octavia* offers an enormously elaborate pastiche of literary convention in its exodus song all to highlight the critical moment of Octavia's departure from Rome. The moment signals not only the cosmic explanation for the coming end of Nero's rule but the underlying cause of the coming of civil wars in which Rome will once again see the spectacle of Roman killing Roman (982).

Octavia ends in a guided (if somewhat halting) movement out and away from the imperial palace and from Rome. Planted frequently throughout the exodus lyrics (876–982) are the prompts and cues of scenic elaboration. The ship of the dead, which Octavia imaginatively conjures before her eyes (906–10), threatens to materialise at the margin of the stage. While a production could be staged without such an elaborate prop, the script calls for a ship's crew. The business in the text indicates that Octavia is being seized for deportation.⁶⁰

Me quoque tristes mittit ad umbras
ferus et manes ecce tyrannus.
quid iam frustra miseranda moror?
rapite ad letum quis ius in nos
Fortuna dedit.

([Seneca], *Octavia* 958–62)

Behold the savage tyrant who sends even me
To the tragic shades and the underworld!
Uselessly piteous, why do I delay now?
You men to whom Fortune has transferred
Authority over me, snatch me away to death!

This same body of men, apparently, move her to her ship as she orders them to make ready the boat that is taking her off (*armate*

⁵⁹ Wiseman (1998) 52–9.

⁶⁰ Whitman (1978) 127 *ad* 958 imagines Octavia already on board a ship at 958, standing on the prow for the remainder of the scene.

ratem, date uela fretis uentisque, 'Rig the ship! Give sails to the channels and winds!', 969–70). Much pathos could easily be generated in the spectacle of the exodus march.

Not to be lost in the excitement is Octavia's phrase, 'Fortune has transferred authority' (*ius in nos Fortuna dedit*, 961–2). Octavia travesties the language of Roman law. The language looks back to the stark images at the play's outset, markedly repeated by Octavia and her nurse, of the ships that Claudius had used to master the ocean and bring Roman *ius* to the Britons (30). Claudius had been safe among barbaric tribes of England but fell by crime in his own household (41–4). The chorus, in its parting commentary on Octavia's tragedy, comes back to the same paradox: the barbarous land of the Taurians practices the sacrifice of foreigners, but Rome demands the blood of her own (979–82).

In her final words, Octavia commands that the boat take her from west to east, to Alexandria (970):

Armata ratem, date uela fretis
uentisque, petat puppis rector
tandem Phariae litora terrae.⁶¹

([Seneca], *Octavia* 969–71)

Equip the boat, let out sails to currents
And winds, let the helmsman make
Even for the shores of Egyptian land.

Egypt and the Nile have been invoked by Nero at the heart of the play and Octavia's mention of another Egyptian landmark recalls the earlier reference. Incestuous Egypt, in Nero's telling, gulped down the gory blood of Antony where his awesome shades remain (521–2). Nero had claimed that civil war was buried in a shallow grave in Egypt (523–4), that Egyptian civil war had been iterative (522), that the victor had buried his sword and had begun ruling by a method

⁶¹ So the reading of the A manuscripts; Zwierlein (1986) *ad* 971 follows the standard emendation, *tandem Pandatariae litora terrae* ('the shores of the land of Pandataria'). Apart from the unmetricality of the emendation (for a chagrined defence see Herington [1977] 277–8), Pandataria (a minuscule island, hardly to be thought of as *terra*) is located west of Italy. The chorus immediately wishes Octavia gentle Zephyrs like those that help bear Iphigenia from Aulis to Taurus (971–9). One sails east on west winds. Compare the care with which Statius specifically invokes the prevailing westwinds to provide Celer a rapid journey from Rome to Alexandria (Stat. *Silv.* 3.2.28, esp. 42–9) and, in closing his propempticon, anticipates a time when other winds will be invoked for Celer's safe return, east to west (*Silv.* 3.2.127–30).

of fear (526). Octavia's arrival in Egypt could easily dig up the civil wars and send them back, east to west.

The chorus makes a final bid to assert mythology over history: just as Iphigenia had escaped miraculously from the sacrificial altar at Aulis and had found refuge at Diana's temple at Taurus (974–9), so the chorus hopes Octavia may find safe refuge in a barbaric land. Octavia herself has chosen one such haven in her bidding the ship's captain to make for Pharos at Alexandria. The choice is appropriate in mythological terms as her referencing of the Pharian land recalls Euripides' Helen who, in the prologue of her play (*Helen* 5), metonymically associates Pharos and Egypt. Iphigenia or Helen: either offers a suitable model of the heroine who vanishes to reappear in the exotic landscape of the east. In either myth, war rages while the innocent victim patiently awaits rescue and return. Yet, in the end, history asserts itself in *Octavia*. The choral fantasy of Octavia being wafted eastward on gentle Zephyrs is overpowered by the starker concluding reality: 'Rome loves the blood of its own citizenry' (*civis gaudet Roma cruore*, 982). It is the most startling line of the play. Octavia, the audience knows, will be made to sail west. And the foreshadowing of a new Trojan war, the audience also knows, is realised in the civil wars of 68–69 CE.

7. 'Then' and 'Now'

Octavia vilifies Nero. The apocalyptic vision of 'the future' laid out by Agrippina's ghost establishes a calendar of retribution on which Nero's doomsday is fixed (629–31). By the time of Suetonius' recounting of the events (*Nero* 57.1), the anniversary of Nero's suicide had become synchronised to coincide with the anniversary of his murder of Octavia. *Octavia* argues the poetic justice of that synchronisation. The critical historic moment staged in the play involves Octavia exiting her family home, looking back to bid farewell, and being escorted off to exile and execution. In the process of this action, Octavia rehearses a family history of repetitious crime and murder that culminates in what will prove to be a final death in the family. For the play is about the extinction of the Julio-Claudian line. Octavia, significantly renamed Claudia at the play's conclusion in the messenger's report of the efforts of the Roman citizen-mob to return the girl to her family's home (789, 803), is in the end a metonym of

her family.⁶² That citizen-mob, the same that appears in the play as the chorus, establishes an equivalency between this girl and the famous victimised girls of the founding legends, Virginia and Lucretia. This they do as they establish an equivalency between themselves and the *uerum genus Martis* ('the true race of Mars', 292–3), which had expelled the kings (293) and a tyrant (303). A popular mandate for justified revolution, figure-headed in Octavia, is enacted in the play. This would have made the drama of considerable interest to Romans who in fact had been participating in the repetitious civil wars of 68–69 CE.

Galba's immediate propagandistic campaign advertising the restoration of the liberty of the Roman people and the salvation of Rome herself cast Nero's reign as an aberration in time to be spliced out of the continuity of the annals.⁶³ Many scholars attempting to situate the play's publication in a historic context have selected Galba's brief reign as the likely period. Yet what we can deduce of the cultural milieu of the nascent city under Galba warns us away from assuming that *Octavia* was produced under his auspices.

Galba, according to the biographical portrait of him that develops as early as Plutarch, was antithetically opposed to Nero's wholesale patronage of the performing arts and the particular kind of popular favor it carried. Amid the anecdotes of Galba's fiscal conservancy, Plutarch reports that he aggressively pursued recovery of the lavish gifts Nero had bestowed on stage actors.⁶⁴ An anecdote in Suetonius (*Galb.* 12.3) of Galba's delight in a lute player's skill is related to highlight his gauche method of patronage.⁶⁵ The single account we possess of his attendance at a scenic event exposes Galba's popular disfavour and the inadequacy of his scenic expenditures.⁶⁶

⁶² Compare the chorus' first reference to her in the play, *Claudia proles* ('offspring of Claudius', 278), associated even at the outset with *suos penates* ('her own household', 277–8).

⁶³ See Murison (1999) 43–4, 54–5 for a summary of Galba's coinage advertising LIBERTAS RESTITVTA, ROMA RENASCENS and SALVS GENERIS HVMANI.

⁶⁴ Plutarch (*Galb.* 16.1–2), claiming that Galba was purposefully seeking to display a huge policy change from Nero's, reports that the new emperor demanded a ninety percent return of Nero's gifts to 'the people of the stage and the palaestra'. Suet. *Galb.* 15.1 for Galba's aggressive attempts to reclaim Nero's donatives to *scenici ac xystici* 'stage actors and athletes'.

⁶⁵ Cf. Cass. Dio 64.2.1 for Galba's stinting donatives of obols instead of drachmae.

⁶⁶ Suet. *Galb.* 13.1: During an Atellane farce, Galba is derided by the crowd as though he were the rustic Pappus.

Otho and Vitellius, on the other hand, curried popular support through patronage of the stage: both were seen constantly at the theatres of Rome.⁶⁷ These appearances at public festival were apparently part of a larger program to signal (to the Roman masses) the continuation of Neronian social policy. Otho had, after all, immediately upon accession attempted to adopt Nero's name to his own (Plut. *Oth.* 3.1; Suet. *Oth.* 7.1; Tac. *Hist.* 1.78.2; Cass. Dio 64.8.2¹, stating flatly that he straightaway appended the name Nero to his own); Vitellius went so far as to sacrifice regularly to the *numen* of Nero (Cass. Dio 65.7.3; Tac. *Hist.* 2.95.1; Suet. *Vit.* 11.2). Yet, for as hospitable as either emperor would have been to renascent theatrical productions, *Octavia's* unsparing hostility to Nero, compromising ambivalence toward Poppaea, and frank portrayal of the impotence of the Roman people would have made it a politically dangerous play to circulate in the uncertain times of Otho or Vitellius' reign.⁶⁸

Most likely *Octavia* was promulgated during the reign of Vespasian.⁶⁹ In Vespasian's politics can be found the distinctive combination of a hostility to Nero that would have made *Octavia's* broad-stroke incrimination of the tyrant a welcome spectacle coupled with a social policy, emulous of Nero's, designed to secure broad popular support, that would have afforded *Octavia's* playwright ample motivation, means and opportunity for production. Suetonius (*Vesp.* 19.1) records Vespasian's restoration and reopening of the Theatre of Marcellus and the revitalisation of scenic festivals at the dedicatory games.⁷⁰ His sponsorship of the stage is then emblematised in his lavish gift of 400,000 *sestertii* to Apelles the tragedian.⁷¹ Such restitutive patronage would have recalled that of Claudius under whose direction the stage of the Theatre of Pompey had been restored and at whose instigation a series of new scenic festivals were launched, including annual *ludi* dedicated to celebrate victory in Britain.⁷²

⁶⁷ Otho constantly at the theatres: Cass. Dio 64.8.2, Plut. *Oth.* 3.1 (where the *hoi polloi* hail him, Nero); Otho's troops frequenting the theatres: Plut. *Oth.* 5.5, 6.1; Vitellius constantly at the theatres: Cass. Dio 65.7.1.

⁶⁸ Kragelund (1988) 504–8 and, succinctly, Kragelund (1998) 170–71, 173 n. 65 on the unlikelihood of Otho or Vitellius' reign for publication.

⁶⁹ Junge (1999) 199–200 has lately asserted the likelihood of publication date in Vespasian's reign as opposed to Galba's.

⁷⁰ See Cass. Dio 66.10.3 for Vespasian's lavish expenditures in popular festivals.

⁷¹ Suet. *Vesp.* 19.1, reading *Apellae* for *A(p)pellari* of the manuscripts; *Vesp.* 18–19 for accounts of Vespasian's generous patronage of the arts.

⁷² Restoration and rededication of the Theatre of Pompey: Suet. *Claud.* 21.1;

Vespasian was keen to underscore his connection to Claudius. The temple to Claudius that Nero shamefully neglected to build was duly undertaken and dedicated by Vespasian (Suet. *Vesp.* 9.1).⁷³ Vespasian's utilitarian interest in rebuilding the city's major aqueducts simultaneously heralded a return to Claudius' socially responsible urban planning: the new works advertised the beneficence of Claudius and the neglect of Nero.⁷⁴ He apparently had real motivation in his rehabilitation of the emperor he attempted to portray as the last of the Julio-Claudians.⁷⁵ The restoration of Claudius to his rightful status as divinity would have signalled a program on the part of the new regime to return to the imperial model of the past. Vespasian might then model himself as the new Claudius, suggesting continuity and stability at the centre of power. Vespasian could find much use in the political image of Claudius, simultaneously populist and aristocratic, to pattern his own image before the Roman people. His own rise to prominence as military leader was fostered by Claudius: Claudius' showpiece conquest of Britain had furnished Vespasian the opportunity to secure triumphal ornaments. Vespasian's elder son, Titus, as the Flavian propaganda began to pattern the pages of history, was a virtual doublet of Britannicus. By Suetonius' time, the sons of Claudius and Vespasian had become so closely interlinked in their *amicitia* that Titus was imagined as having tasted from the poison cup served by Nero to Britannicus (Suet. *Tit.* 2.1).⁷⁶

establishment of annual *ludi* to commemorate victory over the Britons: Cass. Dio 60.22.1

⁷³ See Levick (1999) 136. Charlesworth (1937) 55–6 reminds us that much of the tradition of Nero's lack of honour for Claudius is tradition born of Flavian anti-Neronian propaganda.

⁷⁴ Cf. *ILS* 218 (inscribed on the Aqua Claudia): *imp. Caesar Vespasianus August. . . . aquas Curtiam et Caeruleam perductas a diuo Claudio et postea intermissas dilapsasque per annos nouem sua impensa urbi restituit* ('The emperor Vespasian Caesar Augustus restored for the city at his own expense the aqueducts, Aqua Curtia and Aqua Caerulea, constructed by the divine Claudius and afterward neglected and broken for nine years'). See Charlesworth (1937) 55; Levick (1999) 130.

⁷⁵ See Kragelund (1998) 160–6 on the campaign of Galba upon his succession to image Nero Domitius as a usurper of the possessions and privileges of the Julio-Claudian family line. See Kragelund (1982) 53 for *Octavia* itself functioning as a *damnatio* of Nero (and see above, sec. 3a). But Nero could also be thought of as the last of the *progenies Caesarum*: Suet. *Galb.* 1.1, 2.1.

⁷⁶ The biographer reports that Titus commemorated his boyhood friendship by dedicating a golden statue of Britannicus on the Palatine and an ivory equestrian statue (annually carried on parade) in the Circus.

Octavia, in its peculiar imaging of the doomed Claudian family, fairly resonates with these facets of Flavian self-imaging. The play begins with an evocation of Claudius as naval conqueror of Britain and ends with the naval image of Octavia's deportation into exile. But that expedition is evocatively cast in the mythological trappings of a flight to Egypt. The imagery of escape to Egypt would have resonated in a particular way with a Roman audience meditating upon history after 69 CE: Nero had himself entertained the idea, five years after the exile and death of Octavia, on the very eve of the revolts of Vindex and Galba, that Alexandria might be his haven of refuge (Plut. *Galb.* 2.1). Waiting for him at Alexandria would have been the Egyptian prefect, Tiberius Iulius Alexander, who was first to have his legions swear allegiance to Vespasian as emperor (Suet. *Vesp.* 6.3).⁷⁷ True to Nero's foreboding sense in *Octavia* that Augustus had not buried the causes of civil war very deeply in Egyptian soil (523–6), Alexandria would become the point of origin of the Flavian assault on Italy and Rome. Britain had given Vespasian triumphal insignia in service to Claudius and was a symbolic locus of Vespasian's rise to power; Alexandria furnished Vespasian a foundation, actual and symbolic, upon which to lay the argument of his right of rule.⁷⁸ *Octavia* moves from Britain to Alexandria and in so doing connects Claudius to Vespasian.

And the play would have continued to resonate long into the era of Flavian power. After the great city fires of 80 CE, the play's fire imagery, particularly its enactment of Nero's decision to use fire to lay waste to Rome, would have poignantly overlaid Nero's fire of 64 CE, the burning of Rome during the Flavian assault on the Vitellians (69 CE), and the great fire of a decade later.⁷⁹ So also would the death of Titus have deepened the resonance in the play's

⁷⁷ Suetonius (*Vesp.* 6.3) reports that 1 July, the date of the event, became Principate Day under the new regime. See Joseph. *BJ* 4.592–604; Tac. *Hist.* 2.79; Murison (1999) 148; Levick (1999) 28, 47.

⁷⁸ Alexandria as scene of the proofs of Vespasian's right of rule: Levick (1999) 68–9. Under Vespasian's control Alexandria was able to withhold badly needed grain from Vitellius' Rome in the summer and fall of 69 CE (Tac. *Hist.* 3.8) and then supply the city with much needed grain, March 70 CE. See Levick (1999) 49, 124. Alexandria as Vespasian's own place of refuge from the blood-guilt of the sack of Cremona and Rome: Levick (1999) 52–3.

⁷⁹ Domitian's rebuilding program after the destruction of 80 CE included *arae incendii Neronis*, dedicatory altars to commemorate the destruction that Nero had visited upon the city sixteen years prior. See Cass. Dio 66.24; Nash (1961) 60–1.

commemoration of Britannicus' untimely death. Pliny's testimony (*Pan.* 53.2–5, esp. 53.4) that Domitian would not allow representation of Nero on stage bears witness to the ease with which Romans were able to see their present circumstances in the spectacle of the past.⁸⁰

Octavia uses the past to meditate upon the present. As with the disjunction of time built into the very structure of the plot, disjunction characterises the gap between the events enacted in *Octavia* and the historic reality of the play's (original) audience. And as with this structural device's use internal to the play, so also would the disjunctive gap between the reality of *Octavia*'s characters and the reality of *Octavia*'s audience have invited comparative analysis between 'then' and 'now'. If the play is about a popular mandate for justified revolution to restore the republic, then it is a play about the failure of the Roman people to act upon that mandate with any unified strength or success. It obsessively gazes at that juncture in Roman history when the Claudian line might have been preserved and a tyrant and his mistress might have been expelled. It enacts the perverse internalisation of Roman political power into the imperial bridal chamber; it enacts the dissolution of the will of the Roman people, splintered into factions; it enacts the duplicitous participation of the praetorian guard, waging war on Roman citizens; it enacts the inevitable triumph of an illegitimate ruler over Rome; and, ultimately, it enacts Rome as a place of barbarian custom, bathed in the blood of its own citizens.

Within the play, Nero's victims and subjects conjure a future in which the tyrant is vanquished or condemned to eternal suffering, in which Roman manhood reasserts *virtus* and its attendant political freedoms, in which the astral virgin returns and a new golden age begins. *Octavia*'s audience looks back upon these promises of the past from beyond the horizon of that projected future. They see Octavia look back, mourn a past that cannot be reclaimed, and resign herself to suffering under a tyrant: they are being presented an image of their own past (and present).⁸¹

⁸⁰ See Sutton (1983) 70–1 on the details of Suet. *Dom.* 10.4 and the offence taken by Domitian to stage treatment of the myth of Oenone and Paris that resulted in the death of the younger Helvidius Priscus, author of the work.

⁸¹ *In memoriam* Richard S. Ide (1943–1998).

16. THE POLITICS OF EPIC PERFORMANCE IN STATIUS

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The theatrical quality of first century CE epic has been well-noted¹ but hardly elaborated in its details. To fill this gap, I shall analyse the textual strategies through which Statius conveys an impression of spontaneity and improvisation in the proem to his epic composition, the *Thebaid*. I shall look also at the textual props, which facilitate the creation of an illusion of enactment by the reciter's solo voice, at the audiences, which the poet projects in programmatic passages throughout the poem, at the author's dialogue with the epic tradition, and at his deconstruction of epic's ideology of commemoration.

My method shall consist of close reading, locating performative markers and confirming their validity through control texts (Pliny and Tacitus) that contain relevant information in regard to historical context and recitation practices in Statius' lifetime. Statius' techniques to evoke the original performance and to create an illusion of spontaneity and improvisation that simulate the live performance are not unique,² but the *Thebaid* is especially promising material for such an exploration due to Juvenal's testimony (*Sat.* 7) on the poet's successful recitals, coupled with the poet's own comments on his public performances in the *Silvae*. The close analysis of the programmatic passages along with the poet's techniques to convey an illusion of enactment lead me to a better understanding of epic's function as public performance and the poet's function as public figure in relation to his various constituencies in Flavian Rome.

¹ Williams (1978) 238: 'The poet becomes the actor of his poetry'; Dihle (1994) 177: 'Individual scenes are so extensively theatrical that they obscure the coherence of the narrative'; Conte (1994b) 405: 'Now an article of consumption in public halls and theaters, literature tends to acquire theatrical, "spectacular" features'.

² See Götsch (1985) 202-18, including her bibliography (pp. 217-18).

The Fiction and the Reality of Performance in the Proem

The pose of an oral poet comes naturally in the context of epic. It is part of the conventions of the epic genre in the same way as the epigram is closely associated with writing. One can start an epic with *cano* ('I sing') or *canam* ('I shall sing') without ever having 'sung' the poem, but having only read it to a narrow circle of friends. Callimachus in the prologue to the *Aitia* draws attention to the fiction of the singing posture when Apollo urges the poet to sing, even though he holds writing tablets on his knees (*Aet.* 1.21–4). One can even 'sing' to the parchment: Horace's imaginary critic and interlocutor Damasippus blames him that he rarely calls for the parchment and does not sing anything worth talking about (*Sat.* 2.3.1–4). Here, the fictional oral pose refers to the creative process.

For Statius there was an actual performative context: the narrow circle of supporters, including his father (*Silv.* 5.3.233–7) and a friend, Vibius Maximus (*Silv.* 4.7.25–8), the recitation hall, the poetry contest at festivals. He prides himself in his performances before senators (*Silv.* 5.3.215; 5.2.161), in his victories at the Alban games (*Silv.* 3.5.28–33; 4.2.65; 4.5.22; 5.3.227), in his participation at the Augustalia in Naples (*Silv.* 2.2.6), in the popularity of his epic among the youth of Italy (*Theb.* 12.815), in the emperor's familiarity with his *Thebaid* (*Theb.* 12.814). He suffers deeply because of his failure to win a prize at the Capitoline games, founded by Domitian (*Silv.* 3.5.31–3).³

This self-fabricated image of a poet-performer stands in stark contrast to Juvenal's satirical representation of Statius' recitals:

curritur ad uocem iucundam et carmen amicae
Thebaidos, laetam cum fecit Statius urbem
promisitque diem: tanta dulcedine captos
adficit ille animos tantaque libidine uolgi
auditur; sed cum fregit subsellia uersu,
esurit, intactam Paridi nisi uendit Agauen.

(Juvenal, *Satire* 7.82–7)

People run to the pleasant voice and the song
of girlfriend *Thebaid*, when Statius made the city happy
and promised it a date: with so much sweetness
he enticed the enraptured souls and with such passion

³ For more on Statius as performer, see Markus (2000) 163–8.

do people listen to him. Still, although he broke the benches with his verse,
he starves, unless he sells his mime-script Agave to Paris.

These lines are far from flattering and we should read their criticism in the context of the traditional rivalry between epic and satire. Juvenal disliked the epic recitals of his day (*Sat.* 1.1–14). His fictional character Umbricius decides to leave Rome in order to escape from them (3.9). A similar dislike is expressed by Persius (*Sat.* 1.69–82). The satirical cliché of belittling epic recitation and Juvenal's negative attitude towards Statius, however, confer credibility on the positive components in Juvenal's remarks.⁴

Statius' voice is so pleasant that people are automatically attracted to it (*curritur ad uocem iucundam*, 'People run to the pleasant voice', Juv. *Sat.* 7.82). The quality of the reciter's voice was of primary importance, as we hear from Pliny: *commendabat haec uoce suauissima* ('He rendered these [verses] agreeable with his sweet voice', *Ep.* 5.17.3). Juvenal dislikes Statius for prostituting his talent and for seeking to please his audience at all costs, but he acknowledges his sweeping success: *fregit subsellia uersu* ('he broke the benches with his verse', Juv. *Sat.* 7.86), a reference to the stamping or *exsultatio* (Pers. *Sat.* 1.82; Plut. *De Rect. Rat. Aud.* 7.41c; Lucian *Rh. Pr.* 21). This testimony is in stark contrast with the reports about boring recitals that are a cumbersome social obligation (e.g., Juv. *Sat.* 1.1–15).

Statius' audience is captured 'by the sweetness' (*dulcedine*) of his recitals. Although *dulcedo* ('sweetness') is usually used for the effects of music (Cic. *Fin.* 5.49; Ov. *Met.* 1.709, 11.170), it is transferred to the realm of rhetoric (Cic. *De Or.* 3. 42, 161; *Rhet. Her.* 3.22) and recitation as well. Horace requires a poetic recital to be *dulce* ('sweet'): *non satis est pulchra esse poemata: dulcia sunt/et quocumque uolent animum auditoris agunto* ('It is not enough for the poems to be fine: they must have charm and lead the soul of the hearer in any direction', Hor. *Ars P.* 99–100). The quality of *dulcedo* does not simply pertain to the vocal performance, but also to the emotional impact of the poem (*animam auditoris agunto*, 'let them lead the soul of the listener', Hor.

⁴ The sexual innuendo and the vulgar overtone in Juvenal's lampoon fall outside the scope of the present argument, see Hardie (1983) 61; Courtney (1980) 360. *Amicae . . . promisitque diem* ('and he promised a date . . . to his girlfriend') is coined after *promittere noctem* ('to promise the night'), used for a whore by the elegists.

Ars P. 100). Several components in Statius' script are clearly designed for conveying immediacy.

To strengthen the illusion of a performative context, Statius creates a very lively performative situation in the opening lines of his *Thebaid*:

Fraternas acies alternaque regna profanis
decertata odiis sontesque euoluere Thebas
Pierius menti calor incidit. unde iubetis
ire, deae?

(Statius, *Thebaid* 1.1–4)

Pierian inspiration overcomes my mind to unfold at length
fraternal strife, alternate reigns fought out with hatred,
and guilty Thebes. Where do you bid me
to go, goddesses?

He starts abruptly, stating the theme of the epic (*fraternas acies*, 'fraternal strife', *Theb.* 1.1) as Virgil had done (*arma uirumque*, 'arms and the man', *Aen.* 1.1). Then he announces that the poem is a result of a flash of inspiration the source of which is not a particular Muse, but the locale where the divinities reside. The phraseology (*Pierius menti calor incidit*, 'A Pierian fire strikes my brain', *Theb.* 1.3) conveys not just the accidental nature of the divine inspiration, as F. Ahl has pointed out,⁵ but also the lack of control over it. While taking the pose of a traditional bard who relies on divine inspiration, Statius' *persona* unlike Homer's poetic *persona*, does not invoke the Muse to sing or to help with the song, but proclaims himself an unwilling recipient of inspiration. The choice of language suggests that he is *not* the beneficiary of the Muses, as in the case of Hesiod: ἐνέπνευσαν δέ μοι αὐδὴν θεσπιν ('They breathed into me a divine song', *Theog.* 31–2), but rather, that he is their slave who takes and obeys orders (*unde iubetis ire deae?*, 'Where do you bid me to go, goddesses?', *Theb.* 1.3) and that he is forced by them to sing. Later in the proem the verb *urget* ('urges', 1.43) and the gerundive *canendus* ('should be praised', 1.45) emphasise the idea of compulsion and the attitude of unwillingness.

The choice of the pose of a possessed bard brings with itself the favourable connotation that the poet composes in the state of divine

⁵ Ahl (1986) 2817.

inspiration rather than at the bidding of a powerful patron. This gesture has a double importance for a poet performing in Domitian's Rome. First, it conveys a certain autonomy and authority in the face of imperial control. In this pose of spontaneity and loyalty to a divine source of poetic performance lies hidden a significant feature of Statius' ideology of epic performance. One only needs to look at the contrasting stance taken by other contemporary poets who go as far as placing the emperor's authority before that of the Muses. Second, the pose of a possessed bard absolves the poet from the responsibility for the content of his song in an environment where an author's writings can be easily used against him.⁶ I shall elaborate on both of these points separately.

The Priority of the Muses Over the Emperor

Some of Statius' predecessors modify the traditional invocation to the Muses and include the emperor amongst the sources of inspiration, a panegyric gesture expected from the poet in the Hellenistic period and in imperial Rome. Callimachus refers to Arsinoe as the tenth Muse whom he encounters on Helicon.⁷ Lucan invokes Nero as his only source of inspiration, rejecting Apollo and Bacchus (*Sib.* 1.63–6). Likewise, Valerius Flaccus invokes both Apollo and Vespasian as his sources of inspiration (V. Fl. 1.7–21).

In Statius' proem the emperor does not share with the Muse the role of an inspiring agent for the composition of the epic. The implication is that the poet is not writing at the emperor's bidding but as a helpless recipient of divine inspiration.⁸ The poet from the start of the *Thebaid* is a slave only to the Muses and, unlike his fellow poets Lucan and Valerius, relies only on their power. The pose of the inspired bard at the opening of the *Thebaid* is even more significant, if it is contrasted to the *persona* of the emperor's humble servant at

⁶ On the use of restraint and ambiguity by the politically astute poet under Domitian, see Dominik (1994a) 130–80.

⁷ Pfeiffer (1953) 102 *Aet. frag.* 2a.

⁸ Hardie (1983) 30: 'The distinction between bidden and unbidden performance is particularly important in encomiastic poetry in all periods'. Statius' intent is to emphasise the non-encomiastic nature of his epic, something that distinguishes it from the encomiastic *Silvae*. On the importance of the proem in this regard, see Dominik (2002).

the opening of the *Achilleid*: *da ueniam ac trepidum patere hoc sudare parumper/puluere* ('Grant me forgiveness and allow me to sweat for a while in this dust', 1.17–18). Unlike the poem that he wrote late in his life and later in the reign of Domitian, in the *Thebaid*, Statius appropriates the authority and dignity of an inspired bardic figure.

*Madness that Loosens the Tongue*⁹

The pose of an unwilling mouthpiece of higher powers is a well-attested mode of self-presentation for the performing poet. It also suits well the poet's needs for self-protection as a public figure performing in Domitian's Rome.¹⁰ Poetic and prophetic madness have important and similar narrative functions in the poem.¹¹ Madness is a force that frees up the poet from concerns about the effect of his speech and allows him to utter the unspeakable—what under normal circumstances societal constraints would prevent him from uttering. The prophet's inspiration resembles violence, for example, the possession of the Sibyl in Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.77–97 and the portrayal in Lucan, *De Bello Civili* 5.71–236 of the Pythia, whose victimisation by Apollo is unique in its detail.¹² The prophetess is forced to sing despite her unwillingness, as the narrator in Lucan's poem is forced to speak of Pharsalia despite his reluctance.¹³ In the *Thebaid*, the function of Teiresias' *furor* is to break the resistance of the prophet who finally surrenders himself and speaks: *stant tristes horrore comae, uittasque prementes/caesaries insana leuat: diducta putares/lumina consumptumque genis rediisse nitorem/tandem exundanti permisit verba furori* ('His hair rises in horror and grief and the grey locks madly lift the heavy

⁹ For discussions of the poetics of madness that shapes the *Thebaid*, see Hershkowitz (1995) 52–64; Hershkowitz (1998a) 247–301; Dominik (1997a) 29–50; Dominik (2002).

¹⁰ Cf. Dominik (1994a) 169–70 on the political implications of the poet's pose of poetic madness. On modern readings of the political role of the *Thebaid*, see Dominik (1996b) 138–40.

¹¹ On the various functions of the narrative in the *Thebaid*, see Dominik (1996a) 55–69.

¹² O'Higgins (1988) 215.

¹³ *Hanc fuge, mens, partem belli tenebrisque relinque, / nullaue tantorum sciat me uate malorum, / quam multum bellis liceat ciuilibus, aetas* ('O my mind, recoil from this part of the war and leave the darkness alone. Let no age learn from my poetry the many evils allowed at the time of civil war,' Luc. 7.552–5).

fillets. You would think that his eyes were open and the lost glow had returned to his cheeks. Finally, he let his words out on the waves of frenzy', *Theb.* 10.605–7). For Statius' Teiresias *furor* is a liberator that allows the prophet to sing without consideration for societal constraints. Madness allows him to reach his audience despite the forces that attempt to silence him, despite Creon's entreaties not to divulge that the city's safety lies in his son's sacrifice: *ora canentis nequiquam reticere rogat* ('He pleads in vain for the mouth of the singing prophet to fall silent', *Theb.* 10.625–6).

In a similar fashion, the Bacchant pronouncing her ominous prophecy falls mute after the rapture leaves her: *sic fata gelatis/uultibus et Baccho iam demigrante quieuit* ('Having said so, she fell silent with cold expression and with Bacchus leaving her', *Theb.* 4.404–5). Madness is a prerequisite for speaking truths. These descriptions of divine inspiration conform with contemporary theory on oracles,¹⁴ but they also acquire an added meaning, namely that ecstatic transport is a protective shield against the consequences of one's speech. Divine possession and lack of control over the creative process is what these prophetic figures have in common with the poetic *persona* in the opening lines of the *Thebaid*. For both the vatic and the prophetic figures in the *Thebaid*, divine frenzy provides an isolating protection through which the poet can communicate with his audience over the head of forces that aim to restrain him. Had he a choice, he would have not told us the story, but he is compelled by Pierian madness to tell it. The unwilling storyteller seducing the audience by whetting its desire to participate in the narrative that the poet threatens to withhold, is an important component of Statius' politics of epic performance.

The Illusion of Improvisation

Statius strengthens the impression of the audience that it participates in an inspired, improvised performance through the choice of the word *calor*. *Calor* links the beginning of the *Thebaid* to the opening of the *Silvae*.¹⁵ From the *Silvae*, we know the pride that the poet took

¹⁴ Potter (1994) 69.

¹⁵ While *calor* ('poetic rapture') can be interpreted as 'a (pre)condition of writing' (Vessey [1986] 2968), the word's association with an improvised performance in the heat of the moment cannot be ignored.

in his skill at producing poems in the heat of the moment: *libellos, qui mihi subito calore et quadam festinandi uoluptate fluxerunt* ('The booklets, which flowed out of me on the spur of the moment in the heat of sudden inspiration and in the pleasure of improvisation', *Silv.* 1 *praef.* 3). The association of *calor* with improvisation and performance is a natural assumption for Quintilian: *diuersum est eorum uitium qui primum decurrere per materiam stilo quam uelocissimo uolunt et sequentes calorem atque impetum ex tempore scribunt: hanc siluam uocant* ('Different is the error of those who want to run through the subject-matter as quickly as possible and who write extemporaneously, following their inspiration and momentary urge. We call this kind of composition a *silua*', *Inst.* 10.3.17).

In Pliny *calor* describes the difference between a speech delivered from memory and a speech recited, that is, read from a text: *actiones quae recitantur, impetum omnemque calorem ac prope nomen suum perdere* ('The speeches that are read out aloud lose their entire force and spontaneity and almost lose their distinctive nature', *Ep.* 2.19.2). Therefore, the use of *calor* in the beginning lines of the *Thebaid* achieves an association with live performance from memory and the choice of language is designed to convey a notion of spontaneity, even if in Statius' case it is pseudo-spontaneity. The extempore virtuoso performance was certainly valued and widespread in Statius' life-time, so much so that most references to individual poetic display in the first and second centuries CE contain suggestions of virtuoso performances.¹⁶ In fact, Statius considered himself master of improvised *epideixis* as well. It is immaterial that the so-called extempore productions might have been in fact carefully prepared ahead of time. The important thing was to impart an impression of improvisation and spontaneity.

The *Thebaid* is admittedly *multa cruciata lima* ('tortured with much lime-stone', *Silv.* 4.7.25–8) and its recital, as is the case with other recitals, was done with the written text in hand, a scroll, as suggested by the verb *euoluere* ('to roll out', *Theb.* 1.2).¹⁷ Even some speeches were delivered by reading from a text, because in one of his letters Pliny (*Ep.* 2.19.2) advises an orator against reading his speech since it occupies the hands and distracts from the impact.

¹⁶ For the epigraphic evidence see Hardie (1983) 22. On the mutual influence of extemporaneous poetry and epideictic rhetoric, see Hardie (1983) 78–80.

¹⁷ On the recitation of Flavian epic, see Dominik (forthcoming).

Despite this fact, Statius uses vocabulary (*calor*, 'poetic rapture', *Silv.* 1 *praef.* 3; *incidit*, 'strikes', *Theb.* 1.3) that evokes an association with a spontaneous performance. The physical aspect (using the breath to recite) is also alluded to: *spirare triumphos* ('to breathe triumphs', *Theb.* 1.18).

To enhance the impression of spontaneity, Statius introduces his relationship with the Muses in a dialogic way and acts out this dialogue through a series of rhetorical questions: *unde iubetis/ire deae? gentisne canam primordia dirae?* ('From where do you bid me start, goddess? Should I sing of the origins of the ill-omened race?', *Theb.* 1.4); *quo carmine muris/iusserit Amphion montes Tyrios accedere montes,/unde graues irae cognata in moenia Baccho, quod saevae Iunonis opus, cui sumpserit arcus/infelix Athamas, cur non expauerit ingens/Ionium socio casura Palaemone mater* ('the song with which Amphion ordered the mountains to go to the Tyrian walls; the origin of the terrible wrath of Bacchus against his kindred walls; the work of savage Juno, the reason why the mother, holding onto Palaemon, did not fear the vast Ionian sea', 1.9–14); *quem prius heroum Clio dabis?* ('Which hero shall you give me first, Clio?', 1.41); *et cetera*. We find a similar series of rhapsodic questions in the *Homeric Hymn to Delian Apollo*, the oldest of the Homeric Hymns:¹⁸

πῶς τ' ἄρ' σ' ὑμνήσω πάντως εὖθυμον ἑόντα;¹⁹
 ἢέ σ' ἐνὶ μνηστῆσιν αἰίδω καὶ φιλότῃτι
 ὅπως μνωόμενος ἔκιες Ἀζαντίδα κούρην . . .
 ἢ ὥς τὸ πρῶτον χρηστήριον ἀνθρώποισι
 ζητεῦων κατὰ γαίαν ἔβης ἑκατηβόλ' Ἀπολλων;²⁰

(*Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 207–9, 214–15)

How then shall I sing of you, such a worthy theme of song?
 Shall I sing of you as a wooer and in the fields of love,
 how you went wooing the daughter of Azan. . . .
 Or shall I sing how at first you went about the earth
 Seeking a place of oracle for men, o, far-shooting Apollo?

¹⁸ For the dating of the first half of the hymn to anywhere between the eighth and sixth centuries BCE, see Allen and Halliday (1980) 184–5. For different parallels with the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* from those that I discuss here, see Taisne (1994) 259.

¹⁹ This line is repeated earlier in the hymn (line 19). On the poetic self-consciousness manifested in the line and its novelty in the epic tradition, see Jacoby (1933) 701.

²⁰ Allen and Halliday (1980).

Rhapsodic hymns are primarily encomiastic and always presuppose the presence of an audience in a public performance setting. By choosing a form similar to such a hymn, Statius appropriates these performative connotations for his epic. The same types of aporetic and rhapsodic questions are greatly favoured by Callimachus as well: that is how he starts his *Hymn to Delos* and then composes *Aitia* 1–2 as a continuous dialogue between the poet and the Muses.²¹ The simulated dialogue creates the illusion of the Muse's presence for the performing poet,²² suggesting that the poem is in the making before the very ears of the audience. The effect of immediacy is achieved with a technique that has migrated from the oral rhapsodic culture into text-oriented literature.²³

The Paradox and the Necessity of the Performer-Persona's Self-Effacement

The public function of poetry is central to the concept of *uates* in Augustan poetry and explicit parallels between the role of the poet and that of the emperor emerge.²⁴ The Augustan concept of *uates* is best enunciated in Horace's *Ars Poetica*: *sic honor et nomen diuinis uatibus atque/carminibus uenit* ('So honor and fame visited the divine bards', (400–1). In the *Ars Poetica*, Horace elaborates on the universal role of the *uates* in the realm of legislation, religion, warfare, moral guidance, foundation of cities, panegyric and entertainment. At *Aeneid* 6.669 Virgil also establishes the dignified, prophetic aspect of *uates* by using the word in the sense of 'poet', but he associates it contextually with the notion of 'prophet' and thus connects the two meanings of the word again.²⁵

These vatic functions are part of Statius' self-presentation, as well. Statius re-establishes the dignity of the vatic role for the second time,

²¹ Cameron (1995) 107, 352.

²² Another example of a hymn where invocation shifts to a mimesis of conversation is noted by Stehle (1997) 187 in relation to the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus* (1–10); the effect is 'to make the god present for the audience, as an actor on the stage can create a second figure in the mind of the audience...'.
²³ In relation to the Callimachean use of this technique, Cameron (1995) 44 suggests that the importance of performance of poetry in the time of Callimachus deserves more scholarly interest.

²⁴ For examples, see Fraenkel (1957) 385; Newman (1967) 36.
²⁵ See Newman (1967) 31.

despite the fact that his contemporaries Martial²⁶ and Tacitus²⁷ use the word as synonym of *poeta*, while Persius (*Sat.* prolog. 7; 5.1) and Juvenal (*Sat.* 1.18; 6.436; 7.53, 89, 93) use it in an ironic sense. Statius repeats Virgil's gesture when he refers to himself indirectly as *uates* in the *Silvae* in the role both of a poet and a priest: *et nunc, heu, uittis et frontis honore soluto/infaustus uates uersa mea pectora tecum/plango lyra* ('And now, alas, an unhappy bard with my fillets unbound and the glory gone from my brow, I beat my breasts with you, having reversed my lyre', *Silv.* 2.1.26–8). As priest, the *uates* has extraordinary powers over words and his predictions come true: *uatum non inrita currunt/omina* ('Not in vain run the prophecies of the seers', *Silv.* 5.2.164–5).

Despite this longing for a dignified vatic presence, the clock could not be turned back. Monopoly over fame belongs to the emperor and to the poet's patrons, so the vatic figure has to negotiate its authoritative self-presentation with the dominant rhetoric of the day—the rhetoric of praise. Hence, the subservient, self-effacing stance in the choice of expression throughout the *Thebaid*. In contrast to Virgil's *cano* ('I sing', *Aen.* 1.1), the emphatic repetition of *dicam* ('let me tell', 7.41, 44) in the transition to the second half of the *Aeneid*, or Lucan's *canimus* (1.2), Statius uses cautiously the first person singular in the proem. He encloses his *canam* ('I shall sing', *Theb.* 1.4) in a question, one in a series of aporetic apostrophes addressed to the Muses. The poet conspicuously avoids a strong first-person presence by giving preference to conditional, interrogative and negative statements where his poetic program is concerned: *gentisne canam primordia dirae?* ('Should I sing of the origins of the ill-omened race?', *Theb.* 1.4); *si . . . expediam penitusque sequar* ('if I would explain and follow through', 1.9); *praeterisse sinam* ('Therefore I shall now omit', 1.16); or *non mihi iam solito uatum de more canendum* ('I shall not sing in the bards' usual way', 10.829).

²⁶ *Cynthia te uatem fecit, lasciuie Properti* ('Cynthia turned you into a bard, wonton Propertius', 8.73.5); *Verona docti syllabas amat uatis* ('Verona loves the rhythms of the learned bard', 1.61.1). Ovid had used *uates* and *poeta* interchangeably in the *Amores*; cf. Newman (1967) 103–4.

²⁷ For Tacitus *uates* carries more dignity than *poeta* does, but the conditional clause shows that in his day this usage was not firmly established any more; see *Dial.* 9.3: *quis Saleium nostrum egregium poetam uel, si hoc honorificentius est, praeclarissimum uatem deducit aut salutat aut prosequitur?* ('Who escorts or greets or follows around our Saleius, the excellent poet, or if it is more prestigious to call him this way, the very famous bard?')

He also prefers a dialogic mode of communication with the Muses in which he takes on the pose of hesitancy. He acts out a dialogue with them and thus creates associations with the poetry of the moment: *quem prius, heroum, Clio, dabis?* ('Whom of the heroes shall you give me first, Clio?', 1.41) He asks the Muses to give him an eye-witness account of the Aonian battles (7.627), requests them to allow him to know how Hippomedon perished (9.316) and deliberates with them on the origins of Capaneus' madness (10.831–6). Later the poet appeals to the higher authority of Apollo in order to start describing the fratricidal war: *alias mihi suggere uires, / Calliope, maiorque chelyn mihi tendat Apollo* ('Supply a different type of energy to me, Calliope and let a more powerful Apollo hand a lyre to me', 8.373–4). The unwilling submission to Pierian *furor* and the constant reminders of the poet's communication with the divine carries the subtext that the poet should to no extent be identified with his poetry. This self-suppression is necessary for the poet who performs in person in Domitian's Rome.

The pose of self-suppression is particularly noticeable when contrasted to Statius' immediate predecessors. Horace juggles social deference with self-assertiveness by proudly singing of his immortality (*Carm.* 2.20, 3.30, 4.8.25ff.), Ovid also asserts his presence in his poetry quite forcefully and asks the audience to think of Ovid as narrator.²⁸ Lucan is proud of the power of his poetry to confer immortality and places himself as equal beside the object of his song: *uenturi me teque legent* ('The future generations will read both you and me', 9.981), asserting this equality by liberally thrusting his personality on the audience through the frequent use of the first person singular.²⁹ Statius reaches further back into the epic tradition where self-effacement through language is part of the stock-in trade of the epic genre, aimed at achieving the so-called epic 'objectivity', even if it is illusory.³⁰ Thus, Statius' methodical imitation of an imper-

²⁸ The centrality of the narrator in Ovid's poetry was noted by Quintilian (*Ovidius nimium amator ingenii sui*, 'Ovid excessively in love with his talent', *Inst.* 10.1.88) and is amply discussed in modern scholarship, e.g., Rosati (1983) 46, Albrecht (1964a) 195; Newman (1967) 100.

²⁹ Williams (1978) 206.

³⁰ For the problems with Homer's objective style, see de Jong (1987) 1–28. Lyne (1987) 217 distinguishes Virgil's epic voice from his further voices using as criterion the 'objectivity' of the epic voice, namely the voice that can plausibly be derived from the Muse.

sonal epic voice plays a key role in his politics of epic performance complementing the pose of the divinely inspired slave of the Muses.

The Triple Priamel Format and the Praise to the Emperor

Priamels are frequently used as introductions, a function for which they are especially suitable,³¹ but they are not attested in the introduction of any extant epic.³² The rhapsodic questions addressed to the Muses in *Thebaid* 1.4–14 have an additional function as a foil to the statement of the theme: *limes mihi carminis esto/Oedipodae confusa domus* ('Let the boundary of my song be the Oedipus' tangled household', 1.16) and thus form part of a priamel, the first in a series of three priamels. Priamel one (1.4–17), two (18–40) and three (41–5) impart a tripartite structure to the proem. Each priamel consists of a foil-part and a statement of theme. The foil in each case features a rejection or anticipation, which is cast aside in favour of the positive announcement of the song's topic.

The reason why Statius chooses such a unique way to introduce his epic lies in his effort to strengthen the associations with live performance. The priamels, through the choice of form unusual for epic proper, associate the *Thebaid* with lyric, with the kind of poetry that Pindar, the undisputed master of the priamel incorporated in his odes that were meant for public performance.³³ Pindar occupies a special place in Statius' literary world. He feels a special closeness to Pindar because he is writing a poem about *his* Thebes: *si tuas cantu Latio sacraui,/Pindare, Thebas* ('If I extolled with Latin song your Thebes, Pindar', *Silv.* 4.7.7–8). So, by opening the *Thebaid* with a

³¹ Race (1982) 22–3.

³² Lucretius introduces with priamels not his entire composition, but only books II and VI. Cf. Index Locorum in Race (1982) 165–70. The only exception is Lucretius, for Statius' imitation of whom see Malamud (1995) 169–98. The only priamel in the *Aeneid* is contained in the words of Anchises contrasting Greek achievements with the special mission of Rome (6.847–53). Race (1982) has omitted this priamel from his comprehensive compendium of priamels from Homer to Boethius, although on p. 153 he notes two priamels in Statius, both in the *Silvae*: 2.6.1–10; 3.3.79–84. A similar *praeteritio* has been called priamel by Janko (1989) 19–31.

³³ It was in connection with his poetry that Dornseiff (1921) 97–102 began his study of the priamel and that Bundy (1962) 5 recognised in the priamel 'perhaps the most important structural principle known to choral poetry, in particular to those forms devoted to praise'. Cf. Race (1982) 73.

priamel, Statius associates his composition with publicly performed panegyrical poetry of the Pindaric kind.

But why the redundancy of introducing the theme to the poem three times? The statement of theme within the second priamel represents a second statement of theme in the proem as a whole: *nunc tendo chelyn satis arma referre/Aonia* ('Now I pitch my lyre enough to tell of Aonian arms', *Theb.* 1.33). The second priamel starts with praise to the emperor embedded in a *recusatio* to write a panegyrical epic. The praise is there to be rejected both verbally and structurally. I suggest that the praise embedded in the second priamel can be easily detached, depending on the audience for which the epic introduction is recited. The detachable nature of the praise will solve both the problem with redundant introductions of the poem's theme and a text-critical problem of long-standing.

Thebaid 1.33, where the praise ends, has confronted textual critics with semantic and syntactical difficulties for centuries: the combination of *tendo satis* ('I pitch my [my lyre] sufficiently') with the infinitive *referre* ('to describe') is highly unusual and many editors put a diacritical mark after *chelyn* ('lyre') in order to separate *tendo* ('pitch') from *referre*. The most recent edition by D. E. Hill prints the line with a diacritical mark before *satis*: *facta canam: nunc tendo chelyn; satis arma referre* ('I shall glorify your deeds: now I pitch my lyre; it is enough to describe the [Aonian] arms . . .').³⁴ Earlier critics have tried to resolve the difficulty in different ways such as *facta canam: nunc tento chelyn. satis arma referre*³⁵ ('I shall glorify your deeds: now I am trying out my lyre. It is enough to describe [Aonian] arms . . .') and *facta canam: nunc tendo chelyn satis arma referre* ('I shall glorify your deeds: now I pitch my lyre sufficiently to describe the [Aonian] arms . . .').³⁶ If one goes back to line 17, however, where the praise starts, and joins up the ill-fitting *satis arma referre* ('enough to describe the Aonian arms') with the first half of line 17, the result is a syntactically and semantically smoother line:

gemitus et prospera Cadmi	15
praeteriisse sinam: limes mihi carminis esto	16
Oedipodae confusa domus, satis arma referre	17/33
Aonia . . .	34

³⁴ Hill (1983).

³⁵ Gronovius (1651); cf. Hill (1983) 4.

³⁶ The deletion of the full stop is by Bentely (1875) (cf. Hill [1983] 4), followed by Müller (1870), Klotz (1908), Garrod (1906) and Heuvel (1932).

The groans and triumphs of Cadmus
 I shall let fade: let the boundary of my song
 be Oedipus' turbulent household; it is enough to recount
 the Aonian arms . . .

Here *satis* ('enough') continues the line of thought introduced by *limes* ('boundary'). I will not go into the details of the key-role of *satis* and *limes* in the proem's politics of performance, as this has been accomplished by Henderson.³⁷ I wish to draw attention instead to the possible performance-related implications of a long-standing philological debate. According to Kytzler,³⁸ the praise was inserted into the proem for the purpose of a recital in the presence of the emperor, while for Schetter³⁹ the detachable nature of the praise is to be rejected on the grounds that *fortior oestro* ('stronger with Pierian sting', 1.32) in the previous line ties in by way of contrast with *satis* and that, if lines 17–33 are taken out, *satis* remains hanging in the air:

tempus erit, cum Pierio tua fortior oestro
 facta canam: nunc tendo chelyn satis arma referre
 Aonia . . .

(Statius, *Thebaid* 1.32–4)

A time will come when stronger with Pierian inspiration
 I shall glorify your deeds; now I pitch my lyre enough
 to describe Aonian arms . . .

However, in the version omitting the praise (see previous indented passage), *satis* ('enough', 1.33) forms a logical tie to *limes* (16), namely, the specific aspect of Oedipus' turbulent household (*arma Aonia*, 'Aonian arms', 1.33–4) to which the poet is going to devote his song. Thus, in the version that cuts out the praise to the emperor, *satis* does not remain hanging in the air. Therefore, the two conflicting views of Kytzler and Schetter, instead of cancelling each other out, point toward a remarkable feature of Statius' proem, namely, that *the praise of the emperor is detachable*. The text reads perfectly well without it and, despite a slight syntactical difficulty, can be read smoothly with it as well. Its inclusion or omission could be determined on the spur of the moment, depending on the composition of the audience. The textual movability of the praise replicates its ambivalent status

³⁷ Henderson (1991) 37–9.

³⁸ Kytzler (1960) 331–60.

³⁹ Schetter (1962) 204–17.

as simultaneously a praise and non-praise, as a *recusatio* to deliver praise in the present and its postponement for the indefinite future.

The moment and the expectations of the specific audience on a particular occasion had to be taken into consideration by the recitator, as indicated by Pliny (*Ep.* 8.21.4) according to whom it was common to leave out passages at the discretion of the recitator at the time of recitation. Pliny himself takes pride in not doing this, despite others who are proud of their ability to skip passages skilfully. The omission or inclusion of the praise is an important component of the poet's politics of entertainment and exemplifies the clever negotiation of poetic authority and political power in a highly controlled literary environment. This strategy allows Statius to give the emperor his due according to the standard requirements for epic proems at the time (compare Lucan's reference to Nero in *De Bello Civili* 1.33–66 and Valerius Flaccus' praise of Domitian in *Argonautica* 1.7–21).

The deliberate tension between form and content, with the skillful deployment of an encomiastic facade that hides a sophisticated mechanism for the frustration of the expectations of praise, continues beyond the second priamel to a point where the Muses are subjected to a second round of rhapsodic questions. The Pindaric connection here is prominent:

quem prius heroum, Clio dabis? immodicum irae
Tydea? laurigeri subitos an uatis hiatus?

(Statius, *Thebaid* 1.41–2)

Which hero shall you give me first, Clio? Tydeus with his immoderate wrath? The sudden chasm that opened and swallowed the laureate bard?

The lines closely echo the beginning of Horace, *Carmina* 1.12:

Quem uirum aut heroa lyra uel acri
tibia sumis celebrare, Clio?
Quem deum? Cuius recinet iocosa
nomen imago . . .?

(Horace, *Carmina* 1.12.1–4)

What man or hero do you take on
to celebrate with lyre or resounding flute, Clio?
Which god? Whose name shall
the jesting echo repeat . . .?

These opening lines of Horace in turn evoke the first line of Pindar, *Olympian Odes* 2:

τίνα θεόν, τίν' ἥρωα, τίνα δ' ἄνδρα κελαδήσομεν;

Which god, which hero, which man shall we make noise about?

Statius imitates the elevated tone of the Horatian introduction without substantiating it with solemn heroic characterisations. In response to the rhetorical aporetic questions comes the third statement of the poems' theme, stated in negative terms and frustrating the expectations of praise:

quem prius heroum, Clio, dabis? immodicum irae
Tydea? laurigeri subitos an uatis hiatus?
urget et hostilem propellens caedibus amnem
turbidus Hippomedon, plorandaque bella proterui
Arcados atque alio Capaneus horrore canendus.

(Statius, *Thebaid* 1.41–5)

Which hero shall you give me first, Clio? Tydeus with his immoderate wrath?

The sudden chasm that opened and swallowed the laureate bard?
Rash Hippomedon, repelling his river-foe with corpses, also urges
me to sing and so do the deplorable wars of the bold Arcadian;
and I must sing of Capaneus with another tune of horror.

From the point of view of form, the proem constitutes a closed unit with no transition to the narrative part. There is no connection between the end of the proem and the beginning of the action. The appearance of Oedipus on the imaginary stage is abrupt and has a parallel to the appearance of the actor on the stage, which signals the beginning of the performance. The action of the epic starts with the curse of Oedipus (1.46–87) with no logical connection to the proem. By contrast, in Virgil's *Aeneid*, *Musa, mihi causas memora, quo numine laeso* ('Muse, tell me the reasons, what was that injured divine will', *Aen.* 1.8) functions as a smooth transition to the story beginning with Juno's wrath and deeds. The detachable and independent nature of introductions and *proemia* seems to have become a routine feature of oral performances, for Pliny complains that impolite listeners often wait outside the recitation hall arranging for someone to notify them when the performer has finished the preface of the recited work (*Ep.* 1.13.2).⁴⁰

⁴⁰ On Pliny's overall dislike for prefaces, see *Ep.* 4.5.3; 14.8; 5.12.3. The practice is canonised in late antiquity when long hexameter poems are often accompanied by detachable verse prefaces in a lighter meter, cf. Dewar (1996) 47–8.

I agree with Kytzler that the praise has a tenuous textual position in the proem, but I do not agree with his thesis that the praise was inserted for the purposes of the recital. In the light of the recitation practices, discussed by Pliny, it is very plausible that the praise was in the text from the moment of its first publication. At the same time, the poet has made it convenient and easy for the recitator who would wish to skip the praise, to do so without disturbing the seamless flow of the remaining lines of the proem. And proems and introductions were viewed as a formality that many listeners skipped anyway, as Pliny informs us. Statius himself may have been the first to have recited the proem without the praise to avoid reference to a highly unpopular emperor in the proem of a work with which he strives to attain glory and fame for eternity (*Theb.* 12.819). A text-critical crux for centuries, line 33 in the proem represents in my view a fissure in the script, which can be explained with the poet's clever way of accommodating the existing practice of skipping passages. This practice gave into Statius' hands the opportunity to sit on a fence and adapt his performance to audiences that would have been eager to read unfavourable Flavian connotations into the Theban saga,⁴¹ and also to audiences (including the emperor) that expected a standard epic commemoration of martial exploits.

*The Present is More Praiseworthy than the Past:
The Topos of Outdoing in the Recusatio*

The *recusatio* incorporated into the praise to the emperor deserves a separate discussion because it defies traditional *recusationes*. It also looks forward to the 'outdoing' *topos*, well attested in Renaissance literature.

Statius uses the traditional *recusatio* in a very surprising way: not to justify his refusal to write epic and encomiastic poetry in favour of love poetry, but to justify his refusal to write a panegyric epic on the exploits of the emperor in favour of mythological epic. The typ-

⁴¹ We have no grounds to doubt the existence of such audience-constituency, given Domitian's lack of popularity with the senatorial class, leading to his *damnatio memoriae*. For the ways in which the proem, even with its praise/*recusatio* intact frames the reader into linking the Theban saga to Flavian Rome in an unflattering way, see Henderson (1993) 164–5.

ical *recusatio* contrasts epic and love or bucolic poetry, not one type of epic and another.

The first poet to use a *recusatio* was Bion of Smyrna in proclaiming his inability to undertake encomiastic or mythological *epos* because only Eros flows freely from his mouth (frag. 9).⁴² The *recusatio* became widespread amongst Augustan poets, most famously in Virgil, *Eclogues* 6.3–12, where the poet declines to write a panegyric for Varus because the Muses forbade him to write on *reges et proelia* ('kings and battles', 6.3) and ordered him to produce 'refined poetry' (*deductum carmen*, 6.5). Statius uses the *recusatio* in a very different way by placing the divide not between epic and short poetry, but between encomiastic epic, which glorifies the emperor's military exploits, and mythological epic, which does not glorify the military exploits of the historical and the recent past.

The *recusatio*, unusual as it might be due to the fact that it contrasts epic with epic, falls neatly into the category of *topoi* of outdoing. The *topos* of outdoing applied to the eulogy of contemporaries is a Flavian innovation in Rome.⁴³ In Greek, it is already to be found in Isocrates, *Euagoras* 5–8. Statius is among the initiators of this *topos* in Rome and it becomes especially widespread in the middle ages.⁴⁴ The *topos* states, 'Not only the past deserves praise; later men and the very latest should be praised too'. Statius' *recusatio* implies that the mythological past is inferior to the present. It is the present where true heroism takes place. Certainly, such a glorification method is double-edged: as the past has lost its lustre, so will the deeds of present heroes lose their lustre as well.⁴⁵

⁴² Reed (1997).

⁴³ Curtius (1953) 165.

⁴⁴ Curtius (1953) 162–65.

⁴⁵ Examples of this *topos* where the past is used as a foil for the glorification of the present, are abundant in the *Silvae* as well. Statius sets Lucan above Ennius, Lucretius and even Virgil (*Silv.* 2.7.75–80) for whom he shows respect elsewhere (*Theb.* 12. 816). The *topos* of outdoing is at work also when Statius' praised patrons in the *Silvae* rank higher than famous figures in myth. As Taisne (1996) *passim* has recently shown with numerous examples, epic characters are always used as a foil to the greatness of a living individual; they must bow before the qualities of the praised patron. The *topos* of placing the present above the past functions as nothing more than a cultivated and polite code of praise in the *Silvae*. For instance, the hero Parthenopaeus from the *Thebaid* enhances the image of the deceased slave of Flavius Ursus: *nec petulans acies blandique seuero/igne oculi, qualis bellus in casside uisu/Parthenopaeus erat* ('nor was thy gaze insolent, but your eyes were gentle with a stern

Statius pays a compliment to Domitian by claiming that his deeds require a higher style and a stronger inspiration than the more modest song for which he has presently pitched his lyre:

tempus erit, cum Piërio tua fortior oestro
facta canam: nunc tendo chelyn . . .

(Statius, *Thebaid* 1.32–3)

A time will come when stronger with Pierian inspiration
I shall glorify your deeds: now I pitch my lyre . . .

The use of *nunc* ('now') is topical. The poet now offers a second-rate work while promising a more ambitious *oeuvre* for later in the same way as Virgil pays a compliment to Varus in the form of a *recusatio* in *Eclogues* 6.6–8. The *Georgics* are written during the short interval (*dum*, 'while', 4.560) before Virgil girds up to write the praises of Caesar: *Haec super aruorum cultu pecorumque canebam/et super arboribus, Caesar dum magnus ad altum/fulminat Euphraten bello uictorque volentis/per populos dat iura uiamque adfectat Olympo* ('I was singing these songs in the midst of land and cattle-husbandry and among the trees while great Caesar thunders in war at deep Euphrates and as victor distributes justice among willing peoples and makes his way toward Olympus', *G.* 4.559–62). The place of the inferior genre is filled by a bucolic poem or a didactic poem in Virgil.

In Statius, it is mythological epic that takes the place of the inferior, weaker genre in comparison to panegyric epic. Traditionally, poetic vigour is associated with epic in order to distinguish it from non-epic. Virgil starts the *Iliadic* part of his *Aeneid* with this *topos*: *maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo,/maius opus moueo* ('A higher class of subject-matter starts for me; I begin a larger composition', 7.43–4). Horace marks the composition of epic with the adverb *forte* ('vigorous') to distinguish it from tragedy: *forte epos acer, ut nemo, Varius ducit* ('Stern Varius spins out a vigorous epic as no one else', *Sat.* 1.10.42). Statius compliments Lucan precisely for unveiling a bolder song: *carmen for-*

fire in them such as Parthenopaeus, handsome to look at in his helmet', *Silv.* 2.6.41–3). Similarly, Parthenopaeus, Ascanius and Achilles are foils to the praise of Crispinus' equestrian skills (5.2.122–4).

tior exseris togatum ('You, being bolder, draw out a Roman epic', *Silv.* 2.7.53). By contrast, in the *Thebaid*, *fortior* refers to panegyric epic and not to Statius' mythological epic. *Satis* ('enough') in *Thebaid* 1.33 also implies the deficiency of Statius' Muse: for the present capacity of his inspiration the Theban fratricidal war is enough. To claim that the poet has sufficient inspiration *only* for an *epic* about a *mythological* fratricidal conflict is a strange adaptation of earlier *recusationes* introducing lighter poetry. It amounts to a self-deprecatory statement⁴⁶ representing an abdication from poetic authority before the more worthwhile subject of the emperor's praise.

In the same way that the detachable nature of the praise gives the poet the freedom to include or exclude the praise, the *topos* of outdoing in the *recusatio* frees the poet's hands to extend a gesture towards the anti-epic tradition while benefiting from the prestige that the writing of epic confers.

Dialogue with the Epic Tradition

Proems always contain statements about the position of the work within literary production.⁴⁷ As we saw, Statius adopts multiple verbal techniques to sustain an illusion of a performative context. He also goes to great lengths to create the *persona* of a performing bard before a live audience. *Nunc tendo chelyn* ('now I pitch my lyre') in *Theb.* 1.33 invites the reader to imagine the poet as a singer who pitches his lyre in preparation to start his song. In an *epicedion* on the death of his father (*Silv.* 5.3), Statius explicitly associates himself with former poets: *te nostra magistro/Thebaidais urgebat priscorum exordia uatum* ('Under your guidance our *Thebaid* pressed in the footsteps of ancient bards', *Silv.* 5.3.233–4). While writing a *Thebaid*, he wrestles with the legacy of his predecessor in this epic theme, Antimachus, the fourth-century BCE poet.

⁴⁶ For the self-deprecatory function of *recusationes* in Ovid and on literary self-depreciation in antiquity, see Williams (1994) 53.

⁴⁷ For this aspect of openings in general, see Conte (1986) 76, 82.

In the Shadow of Antimachus

It is impossible to ascertain with certainty whether Statius had read the *Thebaid* of Antimachus,⁴⁸ but in either case he would have been familiar with the criticisms of his lack of unity, verbosity and redundant style.⁴⁹ Therefore, Statius is very careful to set out from the start the boundaries of his epic. The emphasis, for example, on *limes* ('boundary', *Theb.* 1.16), is significant as a reassurance of focussed composition.⁵⁰ Statius will avoid the mistakes of his ill-famed predecessor Antimachus by putting a *limes* on his narrative, that is, in avoiding unnecessary detail.

Live audiences should not be kept in suspense as to the content of a composition as long as epic (Arist. *Rh.* 24.6, 9), especially since works intended for piecemeal recitation should help the audience situate the recited excerpt in the context of the whole work. The proem is expected to provide a summary and Statius fulfils this expectation in a more elaborate way than his predecessors do. In fact, as we have already discussed, his proem is an entirely separate unit that does not provide a transition to the beginning of the narrative and therefore can be used to preface a recital based on any selection of the work. *Thebaid* 1.34–40 encapsulate the events in books 11–12, while *Thebaid* 1.41–5 encapsulate the events in books 7–10. This design accommodates well the needs of a live performance. Perhaps it also counters criticism of Antimachus for not even mentioning the Argives in the proem of his *Thebaid*.⁵¹ By contrast, Statius mentions only heroes on the side of the Argives (Tydeus, Amphiaraus, Hippomedon, Capaneus) in the order in which they appear in the narrative.

⁴⁸ For the different opinions on the issue, see Wyss (1936) xiii–xix.

⁴⁹ *De Garrulitate* 21 is representative of a common view held in antiquity about Antimachus' poems. For a full collection of *testimonia* on Antimachus, see Matthews (1996) 1–14. On the problems with Callimachus' criticism of Antimachus, see the discussion of Cameron (1995) 337 on *Epigr.* frag. 398: <ἦ γὰρ "Ὅμηρος/σύντομός αὐτός ἔην, Ἀντίμαχος δὲ πολὺς> ('In fact, while Homer himself was succinct, Antimachus by contrast was wordy').

⁵⁰ For further interesting observations on *limes carminis* ('the boundaries of a poem', cf. Vessey (1986) 2971–3.

⁵¹ For example, in the *Vita Christiana* of Dionysius Periergetes; see Matthews (1996) T9.

Statius and Ovid

At the same time, Statius carefully excludes those themes that had previously been tackled in Ovid's well-known version of the Theban story (*Met.* 3–4). His song with a well-defined *limes* ('boundary') will not include the entire story, but only the *domus* ('house') of Oedipus.⁵² Ovid's *carmen perpetuum* ('perpetual song', *Met.* 1.4)⁵³ stands in contrast to Statius' song with imposed *limes*. In a *praeteritio* Statius encapsulates the episodes covered by Ovid in *Metamorphoses* 3–4 (*Theb.* 1.4–14) and promises not to repeat them in his own version. In this way, the poem assumes an audience very well familiar with Ovid's Theban story.⁵⁴

The Notion of Hereditary Guilt in the Poem

In choosing to write on Thebes, Statius continues an already existing tradition in civil-war discourse.⁵⁵ Ovid and Lucan had exploited the connection between Thebes and Rome earlier. The poem connects with the notion of hereditary guilt and Roman civil war expressed in Virgil and Horace as well.

Ovid had worked Roman concerns into the Theban saga by associating Thebes' violent beginnings with the theme of civil war in the description of the sowing of the dragon's teeth in the *Metamorphoses*:

territus hoste nouo Cadmus capere arma parabat;
'ne capel!', de populo quem terra creauerat unus
exclamat, 'nec te ciuilibus insere bellis'.

(Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.115–17)⁵⁶

⁵² For a recent discussion on the main theme of the *Thebaid* that counters traditional complaints about the lack of unity in the work, see Kytzler (1996) 25–35.

⁵³ For Ovid's reading of Callimachus' ἀνεισμα διηγεκῆς (in the prologue to the *Aetia*) as chronological narrative, see Cameron (1996) 359.

⁵⁴ Significantly, the Theban books of Ovid owe much to tragic models themselves (Hardie [1990] 224) as do *Aeneid* 4 and 7, which Ovid reaches back to in this part of the *Metamorphoses*. The simile comparing the Sown-Men rising from the ground to figures embroidered on the *aulaea* in the theatre (*Met.* 3.111–14) prepares the audience for entry into a stagey theatrical, tragic world (Hardie [1990] 226).

⁵⁵ Cf. McNelis (1999) 1–5 on the use of Thebes in Roman poetry.

⁵⁶ For a detailed discussion of the Roman connotations in Ovid's Theban story, see P. Hardie (1990a) 224–35.

Terrified by the new enemy, Cadmus was ready to take arms.
 'Don't break in!' one of those whom the earth had born
 exclaimed; 'Don't mix yourself into a civil war!'

Lucan includes the Theban fratricidal war in an extended simile that compares the battle of Pharsalus to that of the warriors sprung from the seeds sown by Cadmos:

Sic semine Cadmi
 emicuit Dircaea cohors ceciditque suorum
 uolneribus, dirum Thebanis fratribus omen.
 (Lucan, *De Bello Civili* 4.549–51)

So from the seed of Cadmus
 a Dircean cohort emerged and fell from wounds
 Inflicted by its kin, a dire omen to the Theban brothers.

One of the omens foreshadowing the civil war between Caesar and Pompey (the splitting of the flame marking the end of the Latin festival) reminds Lucan of Eteocles' and Polynices' funeral pyre (1.551–2).

The doctrine of guilt is presented to us in the very first lines of the *Thebaid*: *sontes Thebas* ('guilty Thebes', *Theb.* 1.2). The curse of civil strife originating from the first fratricide coupled with a notion of guilt (*scelus*), is prominent in Horace: *acerba fata Romanos agunt/scelusque fraternae necis* ('harsh fate and the crime of the fratricide drives the Romans to action', *Ep.* 7.17–18). For Horace *scelus* is synonymous with civil strife.⁵⁷ The same notion appears in the *Georgics* as well: *quippe ubi fas uersum atque nefas* ('for when law and crime were confounded', *G.* 1.505). Lucan in the *De Bello Civili* evokes those few lines in the *Georgics* that hint at the horror of fratricidal war.⁵⁸ He is explicit in linking Rome's civil war to the first fratricide, emphasising the idea of hereditary guilt: *fraterno primi maduerunt sanguine muri* ('the first walls became wet with brotherly blood', *Luc.* 1.95). Statius begins his epic with Thebes' foundation, the sowing of the dragon's teeth. This is an opportunity to establish a link with Virgil and Lucan, his two major epic predecessors in the poetic representation of civil war:

⁵⁷ Wallace-Hadrill (1982) 26.

⁵⁸ Cf. *ergo inter sese paribus concurrere pilis* ('so they ran against each other with matching spears', *Virg. G.* 1.489); *signa, pares aquilas et pila minantia pilis* ('standards, identical eagle-symbols and spears threatening identical spears', *Luc.* 1.7).

fraternas acies alternaque regna profanis
 decertata odiis sontesque euoluere Thebas,
 Pierius menti calor incidit. unde iubetis
 ire deae? gentisne canam primordia dirae,
 Sidonios raptus et inexorabile pactum
 legis Agenoraeae scrutantemque aequora Cadmum?
 longa retro series, trepidum si Martis operti
 agricolam infandis condentem proelia sulcis
 expediam . . .

(Statius, *Thebaid* 1.1–9)

Pierian inspiration overcomes my mind to unfold at length
 fraternal strife, alternate reigns fought out with hatred,
 and guilty Thebes. Where do you bid me
 to go, goddesses? Should I sing of how the ill-omened race began,
 of the Sidonian rape and the unbending force
 of Agenor's law and of Cadmus, search over the sea?
 The story goes far back, if I would explain and go back
 to the trembling husbandman, sowing battles
 in the unspeakable furrows . . .

Beside the obvious connection with Lucan's *cognatas acies* ('kinsmen's battle-lines', Luc. 1.4), there are other echoes as well. Juno's wrath, *saeuae Iunonis opus* ('the work of harsh Juno', *Theb.* 1.12 corresponds to *saeuae Iunonis ob iram* ('because of the harsh wrath of Juno', *Aen.* 1.4). Statius is a master of double imitation⁵⁹ as well as a master of exploiting the full semantic range of words that have a meaningful place in the poetic vocabulary of his predecessors; for example, the verb *condere* ('to found', 'to bury', 'to hide') here evokes the Virgilian *dum conderet urbem* ('until he founded the city', *Aen.* 1.5). The peculiarity of Virgil's use of *condere* when Aeneas buries his sword in Turnus' flesh (*Aen.* 12.950) is that he applies the verb to violent acts of war for the first time.⁶⁰ He conspicuously places *condo* at the beginning and end of his epic to show the cultural progenitor of Rome in a violent act that concludes a civil conflict and leads to the city's foundation: *ferrum aduerso sub pectore condit* ('He buries the iron in the opposing chest', *Aen.* 12.950). Statius uses the verb in a similar fashion, conflating the ideas of foundation and destruction. Statius talks about Cadmus' 'founding battles' (*condentem proelia*, *Theb.* 1.8) and the association with Virgil's proem (*Aen.* 1.5) is easy to make. The

⁵⁹ Smolenaars (1994) xxvi–xxxii.

⁶⁰ Cf. Boyle (1993b) 94; James (1995) 626.

metaphor exploits all the ambiguity with which Virgil had loaded *condere*. The horror of all future fratricidal wars accompanies the foundation as conveyed through the adjectives *trepidum* ('trembling', *Theb.* 1.7) and *infandis* ('unspeakable', 1.8).

The aim of Statius' epic endeavour is not the idealisation of the mythical past, but its deheroisation, the demonstration that even through a Greek myth the poet can speak to a Roman audience and can join a Roman civil-war discourse.

The Proem and Second Openings (Aeneid 7 and Thebaid 7)

In the proem Statius signals that his *Thebaid* is not a celebration of war, but a representation of its horrors, it is about *ploranda bella* ('lamentable wars', *Theb.* 1.44) that follow in the footsteps of Virgil's *tristia bella* ('sad wars', *Ecl.* 6.7) and *horrida bella* ('horrible wars', *Aen.* 7.41).⁶¹ Both Virgil and Statius distance themselves from epic's function to confer fame on martial exploits. The tension between 'prescription and practice which is fundamental to the construction of genre in any classical Roman poem'⁶² is played out with heightened intensity in Statius, leading, as we shall see, to the denial of the most fundamental epic function, that is, memory.

Virgil places on the opposing sides of the Italian war the representative of martial epic in the tradition of Ennius, Messapus (side of Turnus) and the representatives of the poetics of *amor* ('love'), despair and grief, Cynus and Ocnus (side of Aeneas) and subtly associates himself with the two defectors from epic.⁶³ In a similar way, Statius creates a dichotomy between traditional, essentialised epic and his own literary enterprise.

The clash between the two ideologies of epic takes place right in the middle of the *Aeneid*. Anchises seduces Aeneas into participating in the second half of the epic by commemorating the battles that must be fought (*bella uiro memorat quae deinde gerenda*, 'He commemo-

⁶¹ Hardie (1993a) 62 notes that the *Thebaid* starts with *Aeneid* 7, omitting the Odyssean wandering of *Aeneid* 1–6.

⁶² S. Hinds, 'Arms and the (Wo)man: Genre, Gender and the Plot of the *Achilleid*', a paper delivered at the Statius Workshop (18–21 March 1997), Trinity College, University of Dublin, Ireland.

⁶³ See Malamud (1998) 121.

rates to the man the battles that must be fought', *Aen.* 6.890) and kindling a love for future fame in Aeneas' heart (*incenditque animum famae uenientis amore*, 'and he sets the heart on fire with the love for future fame', 6.889). From the perspective of the narrator, however, this idealistic interpretation of the events in the second half of the epic is reformulated and modified immediately thereafter, in the beginning of *Aeneid* 7. According to this new interpretation, the story will tell about *horrida bella* and of kings driven to the grave by passion: *dicam horrida bella, / dicam acies actosque animis in funera reges* ('I shall describe terrible battles, I shall describe battle-lines and kings driven into the grave through their valour', *Aen.* 7.41–2). The dualistic perspective in the middle of the *Aeneid* on war as a road to fame and war as horror is replicated in Statius' double-sided poetic *persona*.

On the one hand, Statius strives to represent himself as a traditional bard. This *persona* is usually related to his father who taught Statius the intricacies of the epic craft:

te nostra magistro
Thebais urgebat priscorum exordia uatum
tu cantus stimulare meos, tu pandere facta
heroum bellicue modos positusque locorum
monstrabas.

(Statius, *Silvae* 5.3.233–7)

Under your guidance
our *Thebaid* pressed in the footsteps of ancient bards.
How to give strength to my song, how to describe the deeds
of heroes, the modes of war and the setting of scenes:
you were the one who showed me.

According to this self-representation, Statius learned wars and heroes (the traditional epic matter). In a lament for the death of his father, Statius portrays himself in the way in which his father wanted to see him: as composer of panegyric epic, rising to the occasion of glorifying martial exploits: *certe ego magnanimum qui facta extollere regum / ibam altum spirans Martemque aequare canendo* ('surely I who proceeded to extol the deeds of great kings and to raise my song to the heights of Mars', *Silv.* 5.3.10–11). These generic statements, however, do not describe accurately Statius' poetic endeavour.

The *Thebaid* places great emphasis on the horrors of war, which are mentioned twice in the span of a few lines in the proem. Statius posits Thetis as an internal spectator who 'shuddered with horror' (*horruit*) in reaction to the events in the epic:

et Thetis arentes adsuetum stringere ripas
horruit ingenti uenientem Ismenon aceruo.

(Statius, *Thebaid* 1.39–40)

And Thetis shuddered with horror at the Ismenos coming down with a huge heap of corpses, while before he used to touch arid banks.

Undoubtedly, he expects to evoke the same reaction from his historical audience as well. A few lines later, the poet projects the anticipated reaction of horror to the actions of Capaneus as well (*horrore canendus*, 'must be sung about with horror', 1.45). The proem catalogues the rich array of the horrible aspects of war: *sceptrum exitiale* ('the destructive sceptre', 1.34); *nec furiis post fata modum* ('the lack of limit to madness even beyond death', 1.35); *tumulisque carentia regum/ funera* ('the burial of kings without tombs', 1.36–7) and cities emptied (literally, 'carried out', *egestas*) by reciprocal deaths (1.37).

The contradictory sides of Statius as a singer extolling the deeds of great kings and a poet who wants to shock his audience with the horrors of war are most graphically manifested in the catalogue of Theban heroes in *Thebaid* 7 where two ideologies of epic clash in a way that establishes a deep connection with the *Aeneid*. At the end of the catalogue of troops Statius describes a contingent that comes from the area of Mount Helicon. In the description of this group Statius far surpasses the normal measure of fictionality of epic catalogues. He punctuates its contrived nature by assigning the name-sake of the mythological poet Amphion as its king. The soldiers are compared to swans that sing a finely spun Callimachean song (*deducunt*, 'spin', 7.287), which turns out to be traditional epic (*perpetuum carmen*, 'a continuous song', 7.289). The description of the catalogue is not a direct speech by the narrator, but is put in the mouth of the *paidagogos* speaking to Antigone:

patriis concentibus audis
exultare gregem, quales, cum pallida cedit
bruma, renidentem deducunt Strymona cygni.
ite alacres, numquam uestri morientur honores,
bellaque perpetuo memorabunt carmine Musae.

(Statius, *Thebaid* 7.285–9)

With songs worthy of their home,
you hear the crowd exult with the kinds of songs that,
when pale winter yields, the swans spin in praise of shining Strymon.
Go forward, eager soldiers; your honours will never die
and the Muses will commemorate your wars with a continuous song.

The traditional epic song of the swan-like soldiers is conveyed to us through the viewpoint of the internal focaliser, the *paidagogos*, whose simplified version of epic equates *bella* ('wars', 7.289) with *honores* ('honours', 7.288) and everlasting memory. The soldiers are singing the kind of song that Callimachus had rejected (*perpetuum carmen* ['continuous song'; cf. *Theb.* 7.289: *perpetuo . . . carmine*] = ἄνεισμα διηγεκῆς), but they are singing it in a Callimachean fashion (*deducunt*, 'spin', 7.287).⁶⁴ Statius is following in Ovid's footsteps (*perpetuum deducite . . . carmen*, 'spin a continuous song', *Ov., Met.* 1.4) by trying to be a writer of long epic and cultivator of the Callimachean finely spun song (λεπταλέον = *deductum carmen*, 'finely spun song') at the same time.⁶⁵

The *paidagogos* in *Thebaid* 7, an Anchises-type figure who promises heroic glory, converges with Statius' poetic profile as a traditional epic bard as envisioned by the poet's father (see above *Silvae* 5.3.233–7). The traditional version of epic espoused by the *paidagogos* converges also with *Aeneid* 7.699–705 where the representative of traditional, Ennian epic, Messapus, leads his singing soldiers:

Ibant aequati numero regemque caneant:
 Ceu quondam niuei liquida inter nubila cycni
 Cum sese e pastu referunt et longa canoros
 Dant per colla modos.

They marched in measured time and sang praises of their king,
 just as snowy swans often do among the moist clouds
 when they return from feeding and from their long throats
 utter harmonious tunes.

⁶⁴ For more on the Callimachean connections of Stat. *Theb.* 7.285–9, see McNelis (1999) 99–107.

⁶⁵ Statius competes with Virgil's refined style by polishing his *Thebaid* with much pumice: *te fido monitore nostra/Thebais multa cruciata lima/temptat audaci fide Mantuanae/gaudia jamae* ('Under your trusted guidance our *Thebaid*, tortured with much file, challenges with brave confidence the joys of Mantuan fame, *Silv.* 4.7.25–8). His work is a result of continuous writing, testing before audiences, and then rewriting. The poet presents his work as a polished masterpiece that fulfills the requirements of a Callimachean short poem, evoking the finished elegance of which Catullus (*arida modo pumice expolitur*, 'having just now received finishing touches with a dry pumice', 1.2) and Propertius (*exactus tenui pumice*, 'polished with a fine pumice', 3.1.8), writers of short poems, boast.

In both passages the king of the troops is a poet (Amphion-Messapus); the soldiers are compared to swans (Statius follows Virgil's substitution of Homer's cranes [*Il.* 3.2–5] with swans) and the song represents a glorification of heroes and battles, a *perpetuum carmen* that Callimachus had rejected in the preface to his *Aetia*.⁶⁶ Epic after this rejection could never be the same again. As Malamud has recently shown, Virgil associates himself with two poet-figures on the side of Aeneas, Cynus (*Aen.* 10.185–93) and Ocnus (10.198–203), who stand for the poetics of love, loss and grief.⁶⁷ The Anchises/Statius' father figure impersonated by Antigone's old *paidagogos* embodies an essentialised vision of epic that can be contrasted to Statius' own view on the role of his poetry and its place in the epic tradition.

The clash with the traditional poetics of epic is quite explicit in the only passage in the *Thebaid* where Statius uses the word *uates*. He announces that he is incapable of carrying the tradition further in an established mode, *facta attollere regum* ('to glorify the deeds of kings', *Silv.* 5.3.10–11), and that now he is in need of a more potent madness: *non mihi iam solito uatum de more canendum; / maior ab Aoniis poscenda amentia lucis: / mecum omnes audete deae!* ('I must not sing any more in the usual way of the bards. I must seek a stronger madness from the Aonian groves. Dare with me goddesses all!', *Theb.* 10.829–31). 'Harmful arms' (*arma nocentia*, *Silv.* 1.5.8) and the horror of the fratricidal duel, calls for this change. The image of the dignified follower of the old poets is not suitable for Statius any more; he needs not an ordinary inspiration, but intensive madness, which forces him to readjust the traditional ideology of epic to these new demands. In a number of programmatic passages Statius creates an epic voice that acts out epic's inability to live up to the *paidagogos*' ideal of song as commemorator of *honores* ('honours', *Theb.* 7.288).

⁶⁶ Virgil paraphrases the 'deeds of kings and heroes' in Callimachus' prologue to the *Aetia* (Pfeiffer [1949] frags 2–4) to 'kings and battles' (*reges et proelia*, *Ecl.* 6.3). I shall not go into the debate whether with 'kings and heroes' Callimachus represents a reference to epic or not; see Cameron (1995) 263–7. Because Statius creates a *recusatio* in which mythological epic is contrasted not with a short *λεπτόν* ('refined') poem but with panegyric epic, he does not seem to have been aware of the dichotomy as we understand it today. The distinction may have run along the lines of panegyric versus non-panegyric, as Cameron (1995) 463 suggests.

⁶⁷ Malamud (1998) 95–126.

Statius' Rhetorical Audience

The *Thebaid* like any highly rhetoricised work, projects a rhetorical situation.⁶⁸ The main components that make up a rhetorical situation are an exigency, an imperfection marked by urgency; an audience; and constraints.⁶⁹ From a rhetorical angle, the *Thebaid* presents a well-defined exigency, that is, the fratricidal war, and a stringent set of constraints, that is, the fate and the forces of the netherworld. The poem, however, conveys a constant frustration over the lack of a rhetorical audience, that is, the 'persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change'.⁷⁰ It is only the *reges* ('kings') whom the primary narrator posits as a rhetorical audience, but only as an unrealistic wish. Exclusively the kings should be punished with hearing the horror story of the Theban fratricidal war because they are the only ones who could avert future fratricidal wars. Of course, this is only a hypothetical rhetorical situation. As Statius' external audience well knows, the Theban war has not remained the only one of its kind and therefore the story has to be rewritten over and over again without a hope of effecting change. The constraints outweigh the possibilities for change and since an exigency, which cannot be modified, is not rhetorical, it leaves the tangible threat for the work of art to remain an empty entertainment.

The kings are not a receptive audience and their memories are not easy to maintain. When Creon ascends to the throne, the poet exclaims:

pro blanda potestas!
et sceptri malesuadus amor! numquamne priorum
haerebunt documenta nouis?

(Statius, *Thebaid* 11.655–7)

⁶⁸ For a detailed study of the rhetorical features of the *Thebaid*, see Dominik (1994b).

⁶⁹ Cf. Bitzer (1968) 1–14. Habinek (1988) 193 makes a good case for the advantages of applying a rhetorical approach even to non-speeches: 'While a rhetorical approach has naturally been used most often in the criticism of oratory (although even there not often enough), it also can be applied to other texts for which a particular audience (implied or expressed) and particular circumstances can be identified'.

⁷⁰ Bitzer (1968) 8.

O, flattering power!
O, ill-counselling love for the sceptre! Shall the new rulers never
remember the deeds of the earlier ones?

The lack of memory, of remembrance on Creon's part about the destructiveness of power infuses the poem with new energy for another bloodshed, the battle over the Argive corpses between Creon and Theseus. Both horror itself and its narrative keeps perpetuating itself due to the forgetfulness of the *reges*. Forgetting is embedded as a narrative energy in the epic. Future generations, the *ciues* ('citizens') 'should forget' (*excidat*, 11.579) the fratricide, because they would have no power to change anything anyway. The problem is that the *reges* keep forgetting too, which in turn perpetuates new civil strife.⁷¹

Statius in a narrator-address to his audience conveys an attitude to poetic memory diametrically opposite to the optimistic view of epic as a medium of perpetual memory and *honores*, embraced by the *paidagogos*. The poet has reached the high-point of the story and has already described the fratricide. This is an occasion for personal reflection and for conveying the poet's own reactions to the story:

uosque malis hominum, Stygiae, iam parcite, diuiae:
omnibus in terris scelus hoc omnique sub aeuo
uiderit una dies, monstrumque infame futuris
excidat, et soli memorent haec proelia reges.

(Statius, *Thebaid* 11.577–9)⁷²

And you, Stygian goddesses, be sparing with the evils of mankind.
In every land and throughout the ages let one day only
have seen this kind of crime; may for future generations this unspeak-
able evil
fall out of memory and may only the kings remember these battles!

In contrast to Lucan's *De Bello Civili*, which projects *ciues* ('citizens') as its implied audience (*quis furor, o, ciues, quae tanta licentia ferri?*, 'What madness is this citizens, what indiscriminate use of the iron?', Luc. 1.8), Statius projects *reges* as the desirable, but unattainable audience

⁷¹ On the failure of *reges* to learn from the past in the *Thebaid*, see Dominik (1990) 82–3; Dominik (1994a) 89–90.

⁷² Hardie (1993a) 8 sees it as condemnation of epic's power to memorialise singular events. Ganiban (1996) 184 reads it as part of Statius' devices to convey his moral detachment from the crime and condemnation of the conflict. It contains the essence of his dilemma as writer of a horror narrative, namely that by choosing a criminal subject matter, the poet contributes to its memorialisation.

for the didactic messages in his epic. This shift is consistent with the fact that the attitude of the public to the civil war of 69 CE was not the same as to the civil wars of the earlier century. As Tacitus reports, the citizens had become spectators and viewed the conflict between the Flavians and the Vitellians as one concerning only generals and their armies: *aderat pugnantibus spectator populus, utque in ludicro certamine . . . nunc quidem inhumana securitas et ne minimo quidem temporis uoluptates intermissae* ('The populace stood by watching the combatants, as if they were at the games in the circus; by their shouts and applause they encouraged first one party and then the other', *Hist.* 3.83).

In Statius' epic about the Theban civil war, the addressees of the didactic narrator are the *reges*, not the *ciues*. Although, as Tacitus reports, many fell pray to the hostilities, which took place in the heart of Rome, the attitude of the populace was as to a spectacle, the citizens were victims rather than impassioned participants and champions of one side over another. For this reason, Statius could not assume *ciues* as a rhetorical audience for his epic on a fratricidal war between kings, but the generic *reges*, a group that must include Domitian, as Statius explicitly mentions him among the readers of his epic; *iam te magnanimus dignatur noscere Caesar* ('Generous Caesar already deigns to take cognisance of you', *Theb.* 12.814).

The Collapse of Epic as Commemoration

Memory and commemoration (κλέα ἀνδρῶν, 'the fame of men', formulaic throughout the *Iliad*) have traditionally figured among the primary functions of poetry.⁷³ In Homer, fame is a guiding principle both for the poet's enterprise and for the action of the characters.⁷⁴ It is future fame that compels the Homeric hero to a life full of martial feats: the speech of Hector to Andromache and the speech of Sarpedon are just two prominent examples. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, men are remembered for their merits (*quique sui memores aliquos fecere merendo*, 6.664). The action of the characters is often determined by the memories that they anticipate to leave behind and the poet's role is to confer fame through his song. The wars are motivated by fame and memory and fame is the binding force between the generations.

⁷³ See Goldhill (1991) 69–166.

⁷⁴ Goldhill (1991) 71.

Anchises imposes the duty of acquiring fame upon Aeneas, who in turn bequeaths the duty of carrying fame further to Ascanius: *sis memor et te animo repetentem exempla tuorum/et pater Aeneas et auunculus excitet Hector* ('Be mindful of the past and let both father Aeneas and uncle Hector excite you to valour while you bring back in your mind the examples of your ancestors', *Aen.* 12.439–40). However, as we saw, the function of epic as agent of memory is highly problematised in the *Aeneid*, allowing two contrasting ideologies of fame and horror, optimistic and pessimistic to coexist in its interpretation.⁷⁵ The mission of poetry to confer fame is very problematic in Lucan as well. Although the poet promises to grant immortality both to himself and to his hero, Caesar, the traditional allurements of fame sounds more like a menace than a boon.⁷⁶

Statius is intensely concerned with the effect of his poetry and deplores its lack of effect. The role of the poet as perpetuator of memory ends in failure, but it is a highly dramatised failure. He embeds in his narrative a frustration over the individual's inability to achieve fame and often represents the task of the poet as one that fails to confer fame. Battle-scenes appear as an impersonal melee in which it is a hopeless task to record the identities of the participants: *saepe ignari perimuntque caduntque* ('Often unawares do they kill and perish', *Theb.* 8.395). He often represents battle narrative as a tragedy of errors (8.450–2). The mother of the twins, Ide, deplores their obscure death, the fact that her sons are merely casualty numbers: *sed mortem obscuram numerandaque funera passi, heu quantus furto cruor et sine laude iacetis!* ('But you fell obscure, a mere casualty number; in what streams of blood you lie unnoticed and unpraised!', 3.163–4). The fight between Polynices and Tydeus in Argos is a pointless strug-

⁷⁵ For a discussion of the two schools of the interpretation of the *Aeneid*, see Johnson (1976). For a brief bibliography on the conflicting interpretations of the parade of the Heroes (*Aen.* 6.860–86), see Hardie (1998) 96.

⁷⁶ *O sacer et magnus uatum labor! omnia fato/eripis et populis donas mortalibus aeuum./inuidia sacrae, Caesar, ne tangere famae;/nam, si quid Latius fas est promittere Musis,/quantum Zmyrnaei durabunt vatis honores/uenturi me teque legent; Pharsalia nostra/uiuet et a nullos tenebris damnabimur aeuo* ('How sacred and magnificent the task of the poets! You save all from the grips of fate and give immortality to mortals. Let not yourself be touched by the envy of those gifted with sacred fame; for if the Latian Muses are allowed to promise something, as long as the honours of the poet from Smyrna shall last, future generations will read me and you; our *Pharsalia* will live on and no age will condemn us to the shades', *Luc.* 9.980–6). Compare the interpretation of Leigh (1997) 103.

gle in the dark without the aspirations of fame: *sic alacres odio nulaque cupidine laudis/accensi incurrunt* ('So they attack each other with vigour inspired not by a desire for praise, but out of sheer hatred', 1.425–6).

While in Virgil, *Aeneid* 9.774–7 an anonymous poet dies after having sung *arma uirumque* and in Silius Italicus' *Punica* Ennius takes part in the Punic war that he will glorify (12.387–419), in the *Thebaid* a poet dies on the Theban battlefield *before* he can even sing the song whose material he was seeking in battle (*Theb.* 8.550). Statius also alludes to the dire fate of two other poets in myth (Thamyris and Marsyas), one doomed to a life in silence, the other flayed for challenging Apollo (4.182–6). Capaneus, the partisan of martial fame receives from the poet a commemoration sung *horrore* ('with horror', 1.45), while Amphiarus, who rejected the value of martial fame, receives empty, useless glory from his patron Apollo before his death on the Theban battlefield: *famulo decus addit inane*⁷⁷ ('He [Apollo] confers empty honour upon his servant', 7.692).

Glory, however, has a function in the poem, although this is not an independent function, but rather a way to connect to the literary tradition. Glory is the purpose of the poet's song when he evokes the Virgilian Nisus and Euryalus scene:

uos quoque sacrati, quamuis mea carmina surgant
infiore lyra, memores superabitis annos.
forsitan et comites non aspernabitur umbras
Euryalus Phrygiique admittet gloria Nisi.

(Statius, *Thebaid* 10.445–8)

You too are hollowed. Even though my songs arise
from an inferior lyre, they will survive the years and sustain your
memory.

Perhaps Euryalus will also not despise his kindred shades
and the glory of Phrygian Nisus will also accept you.

⁷⁷ Variant readings include *famulo decus abdidit omne* ('He [Apollo] concealed all the honour from his slave'), the reading of the late ninth-century codex Puteanus (Parisinus 8051), and *famulo decus adicit omne* ('He [Apollo] confers all honour upon his slave'), a conjecture by Garrod (1906). Hill (1983) 188 prints *famulo decus addit inane* ('He [Apollo] confers empty glory upon his slave'), which is the consensus of manuscripts other than the codex Puteanus known as ω. I agree with this reading. From the point of view of Amphiarus' rejection of martial glory, the reading of ω makes most sense. It is the *lectio difficilior*; therefore it could have been more susceptible to corruption.

This is a very explicit allusion to Virgil and also a statement of relationship to the famed predecessor. Although admitting his own inferiority in a deferential gesture, Statius hopes an everlasting fame not just for his heroes, Hopleus and Dymas who are praised in this passage, but also for the fame of his own poem and for its ability to compete with the *Aeneid* of Virgil. *Fama* is a motivating force also for Coroebus who appears in an etiological myth related by Adrastus, the peaceful king of Argos, the counterpart of Latinus in the *Aeneid*. Coroebus and his friends hope to gain fame by opposing Apollo: *famam posthabita faciles extendere uita* ('They are eager to prolong fame by giving up their life', *Theb.* 1.608). So, Statius appropriates voices from the epic tradition in a search for his own voice as singer of glory. He does not fully identify with this traditional role but instead carves out his own agenda of glorification, which focuses on defiant deaths.⁷⁸

I shall note only one example of such glorification, that is, Maeon, a prophetic figure, who is another member of the group of failed poet-figures discussed above. Maeon commits an ostentatious suicide (*Theb.* 3.99–104) before the eyes of Eteocles to avoid being slain for his bold words; the aspects of Stoic political suicide in his death have recently been well shown.⁷⁹ I would like to add that the excessive and over enthusiastic praise for this prophet-hero is unique. While other heroes are represented in almost negative terms (e.g., *immodicus irae Tydea*, 'Tydeus of the immoderate wrath', 1.41–2; *turbidus Hippomendon*, 'rash Hippomedon', 1.44; *Capaneus horrore canendus*, 'Capaenus, who must be sung with horror', 1.45), we find in Maeon's praise a level of emotional engagement on the part of the narrator that is unmatched anywhere else in the poem. Maeon is 'exceptional in his death and in his character' (*egregius fati mentisque*, 3.99), having dared to flaunt openly his contempt of kings (3.100–1). Statius identifies with this poet by addressing him with an apostrophe that is typical of his deliberative style in other programmatic passages. The language of deliberation permeates the praise when the poet turns to the Muse:

⁷⁸ For a more elaborate analysis of the Virgilian echoes in the Hopleus and Dymas episode, cf. Markus (1997) 56–62.

⁷⁹ McGuire (1990) 4–31.

quo carmine dignam,
 quo satis ore tuis famam uirtutibus addam,
 augur amate deis?

(Statius, *Thebaid* 3.102–4)

With what song shall I add
 worthy and adequate renown to your virtues
 augur beloved of the gods?

Again, the poet does not create Maeon's fame, but only 'shall add' (*addam*) to his fame, which already exists independently of the poet's efforts. Statius makes a politically motivated decision to distance himself from generating fame for a figure that asserts its love for liberty through a defiant death: *quaque ampla ueniret/libertas, sancire uiam* ('to lay down the road through which abundant liberty may come', 3.103). As demonstrated above, he had already refused to sing the glory of the emperor and of figures excelling in martial valour in a fratricidal war. As a result, he has undermined the entire fame-generating ideology of epic.

Conclusion

In adopting a self-suppressing style, the vatic *persona* emulates Maeon in a metaphorical sense by carrying out on a verbal level the self-destruction that Maeon performs on his body. This self-suppression through various textual strategies manifests itself throughout the *Thebaid*: in the detachable nature of the emperor's praise, in the invitation to the audience to forget, in the stifling of the commemorative force of epic, in the series of failed poet figures. In effect, Statius refashions the traditional ideology of epic, following closely in the footsteps of Virgil and turns it into a locus not of memory, but of lament. The poet projects an audience that is not a rhetorical one, because it has no power to act, but an audience that is there to be entertained, to experience the thrill of horror, to grieve and to forget. It is with an eye to this kind of audience that Statius deploys the rich array of techniques that create and support a vivid illusion of performance.

17. HANNIBAL AT THE GATES:
PROGRAMMATISING ROME AND *ROMANTAS*
IN SILIUS ITALICUS' *PUNICA* 1 AND 2

William J. Dominik

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.

(T. S. Eliot, 'Four Quartets')¹

Silius, no less than Virgil and other imperial poets, is a master of epic beginnings. Scholars have devoted much discussion to the prefaces and introductory scenes of imperial epic, especially their programmatic aspects, but this treatment has not extended to the same degree to the Flavian epicists, except in the case of Statius.² Given the long and complex nature of the *Punica*, the reader should perhaps not be surprised that this programmatic episode extends over two books (1.271–2.707).³ The episode is itself an epic within an epic, a self-contained narrative that connects with other scenes in the *Punica*. This recognition is crucial to understanding the programmatic function of the Saguntum episode. As in the *Punica* as a whole, there are deeds of heroism in battle, interventions by gods, and all the other narrative components of epic generally. Silius' treatment of the Saguntum episode foreshadows his narrative strategy in much of the rest of the *Punica*. It directs the reader to the *Punica*'s levels of narrative, introduces the reader to the main themes and figures of the epic, provides guidelines for reading and understanding

¹ Eliot (1974) 189.

² E.g., Ahl (1986) 2817–22; Malamud (1995) 169–98; Dominik (2002); Markus, pp. 431–67.

³ For other treatments of the Saguntum episode see Vessey (1974) 28–36; McGuire (1985) 27–76; Küppers (1986) 164–70; McGuire (1990) 33–41; Feeney (1991) 307–8; Hardie (1993a) 81–2; Thome (1993) 164–8; McGuire (1997) 207–19. My debt to the insightful discussions of McGuire is only partly reflected in the notes of this

the text, and establishes the main narrative mode whereby he episcises the past to represent the reality of Rome and *Romanitas*.

Plataea: Thucydidean Analogue

Thucydides records that in 431 BCE the Thebans sent a small force to Plataea and with the assistance of a group of wealthy, disgruntled Plataeans took the city by surprise (2.2). After the Plataeans recognised their superior numbers, they turned upon the Thebans, who were compelled to surrender themselves and their arms (2.3–4). The Peloponnesians sent a larger force to besiege the city, whereupon the Plataeans promptly asked for assistance from their ally Athens and undertook to resist the siege (2.71–8). While some of the inhabitants managed to escape to Athens, the survivors put up a spirited defence but were forced to surrender in 427 BCE (3.20–4, 52). The siege of Plataea marked the beginning of the Peloponnesian war. The memory of this siege is evoked in the opening episode of Silius Italicus' *Punica*, which features the Carthaginian siege of Saguntum and the Roman response to this aggression (1.271–2.707).⁴ Livy relates that Hannibal laid siege to the small city of Saguntum on the southern coast of Spain in 219 BCE (21.6; cf. Polyb. 3.6), which was a little over two centuries after the Plataean episode. Saguntum was eventually stormed and sacked after eight months. Historically the episode was pivotal since it marked the start of the second Punic war between Rome and Carthage. Just as Thucydides relates at the beginning of his history that the Peloponnesian war 'would be a great war and more worthy of mention than any wars that had preceded it' (μέγαν τε ἔσεσθαι καὶ ἀξιολογώτατον τῶν προγεγενημένον, 1.1), Livy describes the second Punic war as 'the most memorable of all wars by far ever waged' (*bellum maxime omnium memorabile, quae umquam gesta sint*, 21.1). Mythically, of course, not even the first Punic war represents the first stage of the confrontation between Rome and Carthage: Aeneas' betrayal of Dido famously claims that distinction and prefigures Hannibal.

⁴ The Saguntum episode is preceded by a long preliminary section providing the background of the war and the cruel and bellicose character of the Carthaginians and of Hannibal (*Pun.* 1.1–270).

Saguntum and Plataea are mirror images of each other. The siege of each city leads to the destruction of a smaller power by a larger one. The fates of the Saguntines and Plataeans depend upon discussions in which considerations of self-interest eclipse arguments based upon justice. Both parties appear to be the innocent victims of aggression. The appeals of both Saguntum and Plataea to their allies result in little effective action: neither of the major powers are able or willing to bring significant aid to its ally. Rome is no more successful in helping Saguntum than Athens is in rendering aid to Plataea. When defeat is imminent, the inhabitants of Saguntum and Plataea are left to face the ultimate fate. Thucydides' utilisation of the Plataea episode as a statement for the war at Athens serves as a convenient analogue for the way that Silius makes programmatic capital out of the Saguntum episode. The Plataea episode is a mini-version, a model or anti-model, for the main story of Athens, a preliminary 'omen' that casts its shadow and writes its curse over the remainder of Thucydides' narrative. Silius exploits historical material so that the Saguntum episode overshadows the rest of the *Punica's* narrative in a way similar to the Plataea episode in Thucydides' history, but he does so to suggest political, not historical, reality.

Playing with Time and Man

Time in the *Punica* is elastic. Silius gives the impression of generally relating the events surrounding the siege of Saguntum in chronological sequence, his view of epic time is synchronic rather than diachronic, vertical rather than linear. Past and present often seem to become merged in the same narrative frame, enhanced by Silius' tendency to shift tense frequently between the event he describes and the time of his own narration, giving the impression that the event, though belonging to the past, still continues. Unlike the Roman annalists, who recorded historical events on a year-to-year basis, Silius is not as concerned with the chronology and duration of events as he is with their thematic significance. He frequently refers to a distant historical event, for instance, the first Punic war (e.g., *Pun.* 1.33–5, 61–2, 621–3; 2.304–8, 340–4, 432–6). Events are often related proleptically (often through prophecy) instead of historically (e.g., 1.45–54, 125–37). Silius mentions historical events that fall far outside the chronological scope of his epic, such as the death of Hannibal in

183 BCE (2.699–707; 13.874–93). While some historical events are reduced in scope or even omitted, certain events are expanded. Silius' narration of the siege of Saguntum is a case in point. Polybius devotes only one chapter (3.17) to the assault, while Livy discusses the episode in nine chapters (21.7–16). Silius, on the other hand, devotes almost two books to the events surrounding the siege, which would seem to exceed by far its historical significance, in order to stress its programmatic function. In addition, while historical cause and effect is important to Roman annalists, since events naturally arise out of previous circumstances, cause and effect is a more fluid concept in the *Punica* since it involves not just the actions of men but also the machinations of the gods.⁵

This interrelationship of humans and gods is central to Silius' epic vision since it stresses the importance of the divine in human affairs. In the Saguntum episode Silius establishes the human level of the narrative especially through two figures: Hannibal, arguably the dominant hero, or anti-hero, of the *Punica*, who casts his shadow over the entire epic narrative, and Fabius, the dominant Roman hero until the emergence of Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus later in the poem.⁶ The divine level is introduced early in the *Punica* in the figure of Juno, who is described as having infused the Carthaginians with *furor* ('madness') against the Romans in the first and second

⁵ For a discussion of Silius' treatment of time, see Wilson (1993) 229–30; see also Wallace (1968) 83–93.

⁶ There is considerable debate over who is the hero of the *Punica* or even whether there is a single hero. I suggest the hero (or anti-hero)—if one is compelled to choose just one—is Hannibal mainly because of his predominant and unifying role in the epic, a view that the title itself would seem to sustain. But Fides, Scipio, Hercules, Rome (or Romans collectively or Roman glory) and Hannibal have all been suggested as the hero of the *Punica*, while some scholars maintain there is no (single) hero. For various discussions see Rossaeus (1661) 2; Pichon (1897) 588; Butler (1909) 242; Owen (1909) 254; Mendell (1924) 93, 97; Klotz (1927) 81; Duff (1934) xi; Secchi (1951) 285; Wallace (1955) 159; Wallace (1957) 161; Casale (1954) 88; MacL. Currie (1958) 50 n. 1; Bolaffi (1959) 227; von Albrecht (1964b) 21, 55–86; Rostagni (1964) 42–54; Bassett (1966) 258–73, esp. 258–9; Fincher (1969) 7, 32, 40–41, 52, 65, 150–1; Gossage (1969) 74–89; McDonald (1970) 148; Lundström (1971) 34; von Albrecht (1973) 187; Niemann (1975) 23–4; Burck (1979) 263–4, 270; Kißel (1979) *passim*, esp. 209–22; Vessey (1982a) 595–6; Vessey (1982b) 320; Feeney (1985) 390; Tandoi (1985) 161; Feeney (1986) 140–1; Küppers (1986) 46–7, 60 n. 231; Burck (1988) 49–60; Laudizi (1989) 95–6; Matier (1989a) 6; Matier (1989b) 3–17; Hardie (1990b) 14–16; von Albrecht (1991) 1183, 1188–90; Hardie (1993a) 4–6, 8–10, 24–5, 38–9, 62, 64–5, 69–71, 80–1, 96–7; Hardie (1993b) 66–9; Conte (1994) 494; Helzlsouer (1996) 232, 254–5; von Albrecht (1997) 968; Ripoll (1998) *passim*, esp. 17–18, 112–32, 251–3, 282–6, 537–9; Tipping (1999) *passim*, esp. 97–105.

Punic wars (1.29–38), just as she had inspired the Rutulians and Latins against the Trojans after they had arrived in Italy. Hannibal, like Dido, Amata and Turnus, is to serve as her human instrument in yet another attempt to block Rome's march toward geopolitical hegemony (1.38–55). Silius especially stresses the divine level toward the end of the Saguntum episode by featuring Fides and Hercules in one of the major thematic scenes of the *Punica* (2.475–525). Through this divine inset Silius actualises the divine element referred to shortly after the ending of the proem (1.26–37) and invites the reader to consider the relationship between the human and divine levels and particularly the role of divine causation in human events. By reintroducing the 'Götterapparat' to historical epic, Silius restores a narrative level that appears in Ennius' account of the second Punic war (*Annales* 7–9) but that is missing from Lucan's account of civil war. Silius thereby expands the philosophical scope of his epic by showing human beings not only subject to a higher force but also transcending their mortal capabilities through their superhuman actions and displays of heroism. In the final book of the *Punica* Scipio, who has emerged as the proto-typical Roman hero, seeks Hannibal on the battlefield in a manner that recalls Aeneas' search for Turnus at the end of the *Aeneid* (*Pun.* 17.517–21; cf. *Aen.* 12.466–67, 557–8), a reminiscence that points toward the fatal consequences earlier prophesied for Hannibal by the sibyl (*Pun.* 13.874–93). By the close of the *Punica* Scipio has become a figure larger than life. No longer simply human, he has been heroicised and divinised (17.645–54). But Scipio, like everyone else, is still subject to a thunderous Jupiter. Appropriately the *Punica* ends with the words *Roma, Tonantis* ('Rome . . . Thunder-god', 17.654), an allusion to the final words of the funeral speech that concludes Lucan's *De Bello Civili* 8 (*Creta Tonantis*, 'Crete . . . Thunder-god', 872),⁷ therefore denoting, as it were, the final say of the supreme being in Roman affairs. The allusion to a funeral speech also casts a shadow over the unspoken narrative since, in contrast to the decisive struggle between Aeneas and Turnus, Silius has already reminded us in *Punica* 1.8–11 that there is still another (a third) war to come with Carthage.

⁷ Cf. Hardie (1993a) 60; Hardie (1997) 159–60.

Introducing Rome

The Saguntum episode functions programmatically to introduce and to develop the major themes of Rome and *Romanitas* ('Romanness', 'Romanity'), associative imagery and nomenclature, which are given attention in various ways throughout the epic.⁸ The proem (1.1–16) to the *Punica* proclaims the second Punic war as its subject and suggests that the qualities that made Rome a great power have deserted her citizens: *obsessa Palatia uallo/Poenorum, ac muris defendit Roma salutem* ('the Palatine was besieged by a rampart of the Phoenicians [Carthaginians], and Rome defended her safety by walls', 15–16). From the outset Silius transmutes Rome. The idea of Rome and her ideal qualities are articulated programmatically in the opening episode to provide a conceptual framework for reading the narrative in a way that undercuts Rome's ideal image of itself as an active moral force. On a basic level the Saguntum episode is important thematically because it identifies Saguntum with Rome and emphasises the traditional qualities of *Romanitas* represented by the Saguntines. This analogy between Rome and Saguntum has important consequences for a reading of this programmatic episode.

The first two books of the *Punica* develop the main levels of the epic's narrative, its cardinal themes and figures. The narrative of the first two books has been structured carefully to contrast the actions and conduct of Hannibal, the Saguntines and the Romans. Most importantly it provides the reader with important clues for reading the rest of the *Punica*'s narrative. Silius has designed the opening scene to serve as a conceptual commentary upon the rest of the epic. It makes clear that the *Punica* is to be read in conjunction with republican and other imperial texts. The focus upon Rome itself and its identification with other cities from her past in the Saguntum

⁸ I use the term *Romanitas* to refer to the idea of 'Roman-ness', that is, as the eighteenth-century lexicographer Forcellini (1965) 156 defines it, as belonging to the *mores et instituta Romanorum* ('customs and institutions of the Romans'). The word first appears in extant literature in Tertullian, *De Pallio*, which was written sometime around the turn of the third century CE, in the following sentence: *quid nunc, si est Romanitas omni salus, nec honestis tamen modis ad Graios estis?* ('Why now, if Romanness is salvation for everything, do you still not display honourable conduct toward the Greeks?', 1.4). Although my use of the term is therefore anachronistic in this chapter, it usefully describes the concept of belonging to a culture associated with the Roman people and its empire.

episode invites an immediate and obvious comparison with other literary representations of Rome. Through Silius' re-writing of the Saguntum episode, Silius suggests that the history of Rome has important parallels in the history of Troy, Saguntum and Carthage. The Saguntum episode, like the rest of the *Punica*, is full of allusions to previous works. Since the reader is encouraged from the very beginning of the *Punica* to read the narrative through Homer, Ennius, Livy, Virgil, Lucan and Statius, it is apparent that its poetic import lies in part in the nature of its relationship to these texts.

Repeating Rome

Saguntum is imaged in cultural and historical terms as Rome in the *Punica*. From the beginning of the epic Silius connects Saguntum closely with the idea and image of Rome by portraying it as second or alternative Rome (e.g., 1.29–35, 384–5, 389–90). This association is rendered manifest just before the Saguntum episode in a description of Hannibal's purpose in undertaking the siege of the city:

ergo instat fatis et rumpere foedere certus,
quo datur, interea Romam comprehendere bello
gaudet et extremis pulsat Capitolia terris.
prima Saguntinas turbarunt classica portas,
bellaque sumpta uiro belli maioris amore.⁹

(Silius Italicus, *Punica* 1.268–72)

Therefore he urges the fates and, resolved as he is
to break the treaty, meanwhile rejoices to embroil Rome
in war and from a distant land strikes at the Capitol.
His trumpets first signalled battle at the Saguntine gates,
and he took up this war in his desire for a greater war.

Hannibal is obsessed with Rome: he is more concerned about the city he will ultimately fight than the city he is about to besiege. The siege of Saguntum is intended to serve as a prelude to a much larger conflict with Rome, the prospect of which causes Hannibal to rejoice. In attacking Saguntum Hannibal *pulsat Capitolia* ('strikes at the Capitol', 270). In reading these words the reader could be forgiven for thinking

⁹ The text used of Silius Italicus' *Punica* in this chapter is that of Delz (1987). All other ancient texts and references are from the Teubner editions.

that it was Rome rather than Saguntum that was under threat from Hannibal's army. Silius has imaged one of the most famous scenes from Roman history—Hannibal at the gates of Rome—and portrayed its arch villain striking at the citadel and religious heart of the city. References to the Trojan defeat and flight from Troy in the proem (42–4) and the use of Trojan epithets denoting Rome (e.g., *Dardanus*, 'Dardanian', 1.14, 2.425; *Rhoeteius*, 'Rhoetean', 2.51; *Phrygum*, 'Phrygian', 1.106; *Troiana*, 'Trojan', 1.543; *Hectoreae*, 'Hectorean', 2.343) also remind us that Saguntum is a second Troy under siege,¹⁰ and her eventual fate draws obvious attention—by contrast—to Hannibal's later failure to besiege and capture Rome.

Saguntum too is described in terms of Rome and Italy in the Saguntum episode.¹¹ The use of various forms of the epithet *Daunus* ('Daunian'; 1.291, 440, 665; 2.244, 557) and of *Rutulus* ('Rutulian', 1.377, 437, 584, 658; 2.541, 567, 604) recalls the mythological origins of Rome. While *Rutulus* and its variants are employed to refer to the Saguntines in books 1 and 2, they are used to refer to the Romans in the rest of the epic on numerous occasions (3.261; 5.403; 8.194; 9.507; 10.449; 11.165, 565; 13.163, 171; 14.498; 15.328, 642, 737, 759; 16.141, 697; 17.125), once to refer to the original *Rutuli* ('Rutulians', 8.357) and significantly once to refer to *Rutulam Saguntum* ('Rutulian Saguntum', 4.62), which again stresses the close link between Rome and Saguntum. While *Daunus* and its variants are used to refer to the Saguntines in the Saguntum episode, they are also employed frequently to refer to the Romans (5.631; 17.431) and Italy (4.125, 502, 554; 7.157; 8.357; 9.212, 499; 11.506; 12.43, 429; 13.9, 59; 14.3, 15.344; 17.158, 220) in the rest of the epic.¹²

The close bond between Rome and Saguntum is first suggested in the important role that Hercules plays in the founding of Saguntum, since after slaying Geryon and founding Saguntum (*Pun.* 1.273–87) he travelled to the future site of Rome, where he killed Cacus. The nobility of Saguntum is suggested in the nobility of its founder, just as at the beginning of the *Punica* the nobility of Rome is suggested in the nobility of Aeneas, the founder of the city's race (cf. 42–4).

¹⁰ von Albrecht (1964b) 181–2.

¹¹ Cf. McGuire (1985) 57–8; McGuire (1990) 35; McGuire (1997) 210.

¹² Duff (1934) xiii–xiv misses the purpose of Silius' system of nomenclature when he asserts that 'Silius did himself serious injury' by the 'excessive' use of variant names for the Romans and Italians.

Silius further suggests the idea of the city's nobility by stating that it had been settled by Greeks and Italians, specifically colonists from the Greek island of Zacynthus (1.274–5, 288–90) and men of Daunia in Apulia (291–3). The Italian connection establishes a close tie with Rome of ethnic significance. The Saguntines were descendants of Daunian colonists, who came to the area of Saguntum after being sent forth from the proleptically named city of Ardea, the capital of the Rutulians in Latium, near Rome (cf. 1.291–3), which, according to Ovid, was burned by Aeneas (*Met.* 14.573), just as the Trojan's own city had been destroyed by fire. This tie of alliance is also political, since Rome and Saguntum are allies. The tie is also moral, since in this episode the citizens of Saguntum are people of *fides* ('faith', 'loyalty') and of *pietas* ('dutiful conduct'), idealised qualities of *Romanitas*, who observe their obligations to their city, allies and gods.

After this account of the city's location and history, Silius recounts the siege's first battles (*Pun.* 1.296–563). In the *Punica* Silius blends mythological causes of the war with plausible historical (1.60–119 *passim*; cf. Livy 21.1.3–5),¹³ but not necessarily accurate, causes. The majority of modern historians believe that Hannibal did not technically violate any treaty in attacking Saguntum.¹⁴ But Silius maintains that according to treaty, Saguntum was a free city and the Carthaginians were forbidden to rule the city (*Pun.* 1.294–5). According to Silius, Hannibal breaks the 'treaty' (*foedere*, 1.296–7), presumably the one negotiated to end the first Punic war in 241 BCE rather than the Ebro convention of 226, and commences the siege of Saguntum (327–8), which results in the destruction of its walls. The Saguntines prefer to die rather than to surrender to the Carthaginians and to betray their alliance to Rome (329–33). After recounting the circumvallation of Saguntum, Silius gives a description of the two armies fighting in which he specifically compares the siege of Saguntum to a siege of Rome: *certamine tanto/conseruere acies, ueluti circumdata uallo/Roma*

¹³ Cf. Küppers (1986) 44–5, esp. 61–106.

¹⁴ For various discussions (especially concerning the Ebro treaty) see Reid (1913) 175–90; De Sanctis (1932) 162–86; Otto (1932) 498–516; Hoffmann (1951) 69–88; Scullard (1952) 209–16; Carcopino (1953) 258–93; Walbank (1957) 168–72, 310–24, 327–36; Badian (1958) 49–51, 293; Dorey (1959) 1–10; Cassola (1962) 246–56; Sumner (1966) 5–30; Astin (1967) 577–96; Sumner (1968) 205–46; Errington (1970) 24–57; Errington (1972) 58; Hampl (1972) 427–41; Sumner (1972) 469–80; Cary and Scullard (1975) 125–6, 599 nn. 3–4; Harris (1979) 200–5; Scullard (1980) 198–202; Briscoe (1989) 44–5; Scullard (1989) 25–39.

foret ('They engaged in a battle as great as if it were Rome that had been besieged', 338–40). This, of course, is what Hannibal never quite manages to do with Rome, and in fact is what will happen one day to Carthage, but it is the identification of Saguntum with Rome that is paramount in these lines.

Silius personalises the ensuing struggle by focusing on the important figures of Murrus and Daunus to represent the Saguntines. Murrus is represented as a young and handsome soldier (cf. *Pun.* 1.376–7) of Rutulian and Saguntine blood, and even Greek blood (377–9), since men of the Greek islands ruled over by Ulysses had helped to found Saguntum. But it is his description as a Rutulian (377), an epithet used by the Saguntine ambassadors to suggest their common heritage with Rome, that is particularly striking. Here Silius again draws attention to Saguntum's link with Rome. Murrus rushes forth to defend Saguntum city as the Carthaginians begin to enter the city (1.376–420). A young warrior of no mean prowess, Murrus is an embodiment of the values of loyalty, obedience to law, and respect for the gods. Murrus confronts one of the Carthaginian invaders, Aradus, accusing him of thinking that he 'was in fact already first mounting the Capitoline as a conqueror' (*certe Capitolia primus/scandebas uictor*, 384–5). From the perspective of Murrus, Saguntum was to serve as Aradus' substitute for Rome, since the Carthaginian is presumed to think that he had already stormed the walls of Rome and was ascending the Capitoline. Murrus so completely identifies his city with Rome that for a moment it is possible to forget that it is in fact Saguntum rather than Rome he is defending. In any event, the mere mention of the association stresses the close link between the cities. Next Murrus buries his spear in Hiberus, and as his Carthaginian foe lies close to death remarks: *hac iter est . . . uobis ad moenia Romae, / o metuenda manus. sic, quo properatis, eundum* ('This is the path you must take to the walls of Rome, dreaded host; thus you must go the place to which you hurry', 389–90). Instead of merely associating Saguntum with Rome, or vice versa, Murrus sees Saguntum as Rome.

While Murrus is defending Saguntum, another Saguntine, Daunus, encounters Hannibal. The name of Daunus is significant for its Italian associations since he was at one time king over the eponymous region of Daunia in Apulia (cf. *Pun.* 1.665). Daunus is renowned for his abilities to persuade men by speech and to protect the laws (1.442). After Hannibal slays Daunus, the Carthaginian general confronts

Murrus (475–87), who is striving to preserve loyalty and to uphold the law (cf. 481), and overwhelms him (488–517). The scene is reminiscent of the close of the final scene in the *Aeneid*. Just as Aeneas in a rage plunges his sword full into Turnus' breast (*Aen.* 12.950–1), Hannibal drives his sword home in fury into Murrus (*Pun.* 1.515–17). The deaths of Daunus and Murrus with their Italian ancestry and associations seem to presage a bleak future for Rome. Hannibal's slaying of these individual warriors is a precursor of his victory over Saguntum, which, as suggested in the name of his victim Daunus, comes to serve as a substitute for his designs on Rome.¹⁵ If Rome is to defeat Hannibal and to defend *fides* and *pietas* successfully, its citizens will have to be much stronger and more resolute morally than Murrus and Daunus. The confrontation between Hannibal and Murrus anticipates the confrontations between Hannibal and Scipio at Cannae (9.430–85) and Zama (17.391–405). Hannibal and Scipio at Zama are virtually indistinguishable from each other:¹⁶

Scipio si Libycis esset generatus in oris,
sceptra ad Agenoreos credunt uentura nepotes,
Hannibal Ausonia genitus si sede fuisset,
haud dubitant terras Itala in dicione futuras.

(Silius Italicus, *Punica* 17.402–5)

If Scipio had been born on African shores,
They held that power would have gone to the sons of Agenor [Carthaginians];
If Hannibal had been born on Italian soil,
They did not doubt that the world would be under Italian rule.

But for fortune Scipio could be Hannibal and Hannibal Scipio. As Scipio and Hannibal confront each other at the decisive moment of the battle, each is represented as being potentially the other. This mutual identification is provocatively imaged in the clothing of Tyrian purple that each wears on to the battlefield (Hannibal: *Pun.* 17.391; Scipio: 17.395).

From the beginning of the Saguntum episode, it is apparent that the contest between Hannibal and Scipio represents more than the struggle for geopolitical hegemony between two superpowers. When

¹⁵ Cf. McGuire (1985) 57; McGuire (1990) 35; McGuire (1997) 209–10.

¹⁶ Cf. Hardie (1993a) 24–5; on the similarities and differences between Hannibal and Scipio, see Marks (1999) 369–82.

Hannibal is wounded, the Saguntines take advantage of a break in the fighting, rebuild their walls, and send envoys to Rome to seek military assistance (*Pun.* 1.538–63). The senators and elders of Saguntum enjoin the envoys: *ite citi, deflete fidem murosque ruentes/antiquaque domo meliora accersite fata* ('Go quickly; lament our loyalty and our collapsing walls, and summon a better fate from our ancient home', 571–2). The close relationship between Saguntum and Rome is apparent not only in the appeal of the Saguntines to the descendants of Rome, their ancient home, but also in the reference to the Saguntines as Rutulians (584). This ancient bond has motivated the Saguntines to remain loyal to Rome in the face of Carthaginian aggression and the impending destruction of their city. The test for Rome is whether it can prove itself worthy of Saguntum's steadfast loyalty and come to the aid of her ally. By drawing attention to the loyalty and virtue of the Saguntines, Silius exemplifies the qualities that the Romans must demonstrate in order to show themselves to be models of *Romanitas*. By frequently stressing the close connection between Saguntum and Rome throughout his narrative of Saguntum's siege and fall and drawing attention to it elsewhere in the *Punica*, the reader becomes sensitised to think of Saguntum as another Rome and to interpret qualities attributed to her citizens in terms of traditional Roman virtues. It is non-Romans, not Romans, who are true exemplars of *fides* and *pietas*.

Saguntum at Rome

After the Saguntines arrive at Rome to plead their case for military assistance (*Pun.* 1.608), the consul convenes a meeting of the senate in one of the temples (609–16):

consilium uocat augustum castaque beatos
 paupertate patres ac nomina parta triumphis
 consul et aequantem superos uirtute senatum.
 facta animosa uiros et recti sacra cupido
 attollunt; hirtaeque togae neglectaque mensa
 dexteraque a curuis capulo non segnis aratris;
 exiguo faciles et opum non indiga corda,
 ad paruos curru remeabant saepe penates.

(Silius Italicus, *Punica* 1.609–16)

The consul summoned the venerable assembly,
 the senators rich in guiltless poverty, with names gained
 by triumphs, and a senate equal to the gods in virtue.
 Bold deeds and a sacred desire for virtue exalted
 these men; their togas were rough and their meals plain;
 and the hands from the curved plough were quick with the sword-hilt.
 Satisfied with little and without a heart greedy for wealth,
 they often returned to their simple homes by chariot.

Humility, virtue, valour, justice, honour: these are the qualities upon which Rome was established. The doors of the temple house memorialise Roman conquests won by courage in battle. Trophies from earlier wars—captured chariots, armour, axes, perforated shields, blood-stained weapons, bolts of city gates, prows of ships, standards, helmets, javelins—serve as testimonials of Roman strength and honour in earlier wars against the Carthaginians, Senones, Gauls, Epirotes, Ligurians, Spanish tribes and Alpine people (617–29).

In the dignified atmosphere of the temple, adorned with memorabilia of the venerable past of Rome, the Saguntine ambassadors plead their case to the senate. Sicoris, the leader of the deputation, begins his plea for assistance by addressing the senators as *sacrata gens clara fide* ('a people famous for its consecrated loyalty', *Pun.* 1.634) and he stresses Rome's renown for honouring its pledges. He also points out Hannibal's resolve to destroy Rome and emphasises Rome's celebrated history, especially her military successes (651–65). Sicoris appeals particularly to the common bond that Rome shares with Saguntum by pointing out his own Italian origins and the common bond between the two cities (665–9). It is clear from his speech that in order for Rome to act honourably it must come to the defence of its ally.

The initial signs are encouraging: the Roman senate debates not whether or not to assist Saguntum but rather how. Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus presses for war without delay (*Pun.* 1.676–8). Silius states that Lentulus spoke *ut cernens accensae tecta Sagunti* ('as if he actually saw the homes of Saguntum on fire', 676). Lentulus seems to empathise as much with the plight of the Saguntines as if it were Roman houses that were being burned. He urges war as if it were Rome that was under attack and there were no other option available. However, it is the commander Quintus Fabius Maximus, represented as a voice of experience and wisdom, who appears to embody the qualities of *Romanitas*:

at Fabius cauta speculator mente futuri
 nec laetus dubiis parcusque lacescere Martem
 et melior clauso bellum producere ferro,
 prima super tantis rebus pensanda, ducisne
 ceperit arma furor, patres an signa moueri
 censuerint, mittique uiros, qui exacta reportent.
 prouidus haec ritu uatis fundebat ab alto
 pectore praemeditans Fabius surgentia bella . . .

(Silius Italicus, *Punica* 1.679–86)

But Fabius, pondering the future with a cautious mind,
 not taking delight in uncertain paths and in urging war,
 and better at extending war with an unsheathed sword, then spoke.
 He said that in such grave matters they must first resolve whether
 the madness of the leader [Hannibal] or the senators decreed the
 army to march; they should send envoys to check and to report.
 Seeing the future like a prophet and musing over the
 approaching war, Fabius poured these words from his noble soul.

This picture of a prophet-like Fabius is very different from Livy's portrayal of Fabius as an overly superstitious general during the critical years of the war (216–214 BCE) when he hesitates to undertake military campaigns (cf. Livy 22.36–24.42 *passim*) without favourable omens, a strategy that earns him the epithet *Cunctator* ('the delayer'). At this point of the *Punica*'s narrative Silius depicts Fabius as a commonsensical commander who adopts delaying tactics in order to ensure Rome's survival to fight another day.

In the process of ensuring Rome's survival, however, Fabius is thinking only of Rome. The concluding simile of the passage in which Silius employs a nautical metaphor brings this point home manifestly: *ut saepe e celsa grandaeus puppe magister/prospiciens signis uenturum in carbasa Corum/summo iam dudum substringit lintea malo* ('In this way a veteran pilot, when from the high stern he sees the signs that the storm will soon strike his canvas, has already drawn in his sails to the topmast', *Pun.* 1.687–9). Fabius' strategy of inaction in the *Punica*, then, is not borne out of a reliance on superstition, as in Livy, but is designed to ensure that Rome avoids confronting Carthage until it can do so on terms that are militarily favourable to her.

In the *Punica* Silius represents these terms metaphorically in the figure of Fortuna. At the beginning of the epic he observes: *quaesitumque diu, qua tandem poneret arce/terrarum Fortuna caput* ('it long was uncertain on which of the two citadels Fortune would establish the capital of the world', 1.7–8). At the beginning of book 7 Silius

remarks: *ac ni sacra seni uis impressumque fuisset/sistere cunctando Fortunam aduersa fouentem,/ultima Dardanii transisset nominis aetas* ('If it had not been for that old man's [Fabius'] godly force and his will to stop by delay the favoured Fortune of the enemy, the Roman name would have passed into history', 9–11). A little later Silius has Fabius explain his strategy of inaction to his soldiers by commenting: *non ulla perenni/amplexu Fortuna fouet* ('Fortune never enfolds any man in her arms forever', 7.244–5). Fabius is a practical man who can see beyond the present moment of Carthaginian dominance. He can see that his strategy of delaying will frustrate Hannibal and eventually wear down Carthage and deplete her resources (cf. 7.123–30).

Fabius also anticipates the difficulties that war with Carthage will create for Rome at the present time. He hesitates to engage in war against Carthage without ascertaining whether the root cause of the assault upon Saguntum was the madness of Hannibal or a decree of the Carthaginian senate (*Pun.* 1.682–4). Fabius is cautious before the Roman senate: he is reluctant to wage war unless it cannot be avoided. He knows that war should not be undertaken impulsively and that the forthcoming struggle will require preparedness, perseverance and sacrifice.¹⁷ Rome seems to err, however, when it decides to send envoys to Saguntum to exhort Hannibal to cease his attack upon the city, then to journey to Carthage and declare war if their demand is ignored: *sed lacrimae atque ira mixtus dolor impulit omnes/prae-cipitare latens fatum*, 'But tears and grief mixed with anger impelled them all to rush headlong into an unknown fate', 690–1). The suggestion is that in taking this course of action the Roman senate is being governed not by traditional Roman virtues but rather by sorrow and resentment.

Rome at Carthage

As the Roman embassy seeks to land in Spain for a meeting with Hannibal, he shows no desire to negotiate with Rome; instead he orders his men to display their arms along the shore and continues with his siege of Saguntum (*Pun.* 2.15–38). Hannibal's view of the

¹⁷ According to von Albrecht (1964b) 68–76, Fabius embodies the cautious side of Roman *uirtus*.

geopolitical and ideological reality of Roman rule reveals the cause of his determination to destroy them: *Rhoeteius immo/aeternum imperitet populis saeculisque propaget/regna ferox; nos iussa uirum nutusque tremamus* ('No indeed, let the Rhoetean [i.e., Roman] rule forever and cruelly extend his tyranny over nations for ages; let us tremble at the orders of men and their nod', 51-3). In these lines Hannibal restates Rome's mission as defined by Anchises in Virgil's *Aeneid*: *tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento* ('You, Roman, remember to rule nations by your command', 6.851). Hannibal's appraisal of the tyrannous imperialism of Rome brings to mind the British chieftain Calgacus' view of the Roman practice of empire in Tacitus' *Agricola*: *aufferre trucidare rapere falsis nominibus imperium, atque ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant* ('To plunder, butchery, theft [the Romans] assign the name of empire, and when they make war they call it peace', 30). In the *Punica* the Carthaginian troops groan at the thought of being subject to Roman tyranny and renew their assault upon Saguntum with greater courage (2.54-5).

After a lengthy description of the fighting outside the walls of Saguntum (*Pun.* 2.56-269), the narrative shifts to Carthage where the Roman ambassadors led by Fabius confer with the Carthaginian senators (270-389). The senator Gestar cites Fabius' demands to the Carthaginians that they lay down their arms and withdraw from Saguntum's citadel (368-9), suggesting that in his eyes the Romans have already conceded the loss of Saguntum. When the Carthaginian senate does not accede to Fabius' call for an unambiguous response regarding his demands, Fabius peremptorily declares war upon Carthage before returning to Rome (383-90). The conduct of the Roman envoys has immediate repercussions for Saguntum. The envoys approach Carthage 'in a threatening manner' (*minaci aduentu*, 272-3) and Fabius is portrayed as being resentful, impatient, even eager for war (382-3, 388-9). Fabius' belligerent conduct, in fact, effectively seals Saguntum's fate. While his dramatic declaration does contrast with his otherwise cautious approach to the war itself, there is significantly no mention of any awareness on the part of Fabius of the consequences of his failed mission for the Saguntines; subsequently, the siege of Saguntum continues, although Hannibal finds time to take a break from the siege himself to check the rebellion of other Spanish tribes (391-474).

At this point the Saguntum narrative moves into its final stage with Silius notably stressing the lack of Roman aid:

iamque senescebat uallatus moenibus hostis,
 carpebatque dies urbem, dum signa manusque
 expectant fessi socios. tandem aequore uano
 auertunt oculos frustrataque litora ponunt
 et propius suprema uident.

(Silius Italicus, *Punica* 2.457–61)

By now the besieged enemy was becoming weaker, and time was robbing the city of its strength; while weary they wait for the standards and their ally's troops. At length they avert their eyes from the empty sea, reckon the shore as hopeless, and see the end is near.

The Romans fail their loyal allies and leave Saguntum to their fate. The Saguntines remain steadfastly loyal to Rome, despite the disastrous consequences, but Rome through its inaction and lack of fidelity survives to fight another day. Fabius may be wise and experienced, notwithstanding his dramatic declaration of war upon Carthage, but his qualities of wisdom and experience are of no benefit to the Saguntines, who have proven their steadfast loyalty to Rome. It seems as if the unfortunate corollaries of caution and wisdom as embodied in the person of Fabius are inaction and betrayal as represented in the Roman abandonment of the Saguntines. While Livy stresses the grief, pity and shame at Rome for its role in the fate of Saguntum (21.16), it is significant that Silius avoids making any reference in his narrative to these feelings on the part of the Romans.

Playing Down Suicide

Once Rome leaves Saguntum to its fate, it is left to the gods to determine what assistance, if any, is to be given to the Saguntines. The final scene of the Saguntum episode features the allegory of Fides, which is one of the major episodes in the *Punica*. Attention is drawn to the divine level of the *Punica* and its relation to the human level, especially the role of divine causation in human affairs. The divine and human levels function in this scene to complement the psychological mode of the narrative, a mode that reflects Silius' view of human nature. In this section Silius shifts to the divine level to state clearly the nature of the conflict on a human level. In this cosmic scene the fury Tisiphone and Juno oppose Fides and Hercules. Hercules appeals to Fides to assist Saguntum and stresses that the

plight of Saguntum is attributable to its devotedness to the goddess (*Pun.* 2.475–92). Fides asserts that she has fled the earth and lives apart from humankind because of its wickedness (*Pun.* 2.496–506), which repeats the act of the benevolent goddess Pietas in Statius' *Thebaid* (11.457–70, esp. 465–70), but her claim to abhorrence at human criminality would appear to be disturbingly undermined when Murrus suggests that she has retained her abode on earth (*Pun.* 6.547–8).

In response to Hercules' request, Fides claims that she can only grant the Saguntines a glorious death (*Pun.* 2.507–8, 511–12). The plausible human psychological motive of acting heroically to gain an honourable death in the face of tyranny is given a divine causation. The psychological dimension of the *Punica*, however, extends beyond the apparent celebration of Fides. After the goddess descends to Saguntum to ensure that its citizens die with honour (513–14), she urges the Saguntines to take up arms on the battlefield and to experience a noble death in her defence (515–20). In this regard Fides again recalls Pietas in Statius' *Thebaid*, who exhorts men to wage a profane war in an attempt to prevent the even worse crime of fratricide from being perpetrated (*Theb.* 11.477–81),¹⁸ but the demonic manner of Fides' call to arms arrests: 'she takes possession of their minds' (*inuadit mentes*, *Pun.* 2.515) and 'infuses them with a burning desire' (*flagrantem inspirat amorem*, 2.517). Juno catches sight of Fides' encouragement of the Saguntines and despatches Tisiphone to Saguntum to hasten their deaths (*Pun.* 2.526–52), just as she had sent Allecto in Virgil's *Aeneid* to incite war and hatred (*Aen.* 7.331–40). Tisiphone appears to the Saguntines, descendants of the Rutulians, after she disguises herself as Tiburna, the widow of Murrus (*Pun.* 2.553–60), whose name evokes suggestions of Italian ancestry, just as Allecto, disguised as a priestess of Juno, appears to Turnus, the king of the Rutulians who was slain by Aeneas (*Aen.* 7.415–20). Tisiphone's objective is to thwart the intentions of Fides to grant an honourable death to the Saguntines. The fury incites the Saguntines to kill each other in order to avoid being enslaved by the Carthaginians: she urges the fathers to slay their sons and the sons to kill their fathers and mothers (*Pun.* 2.561–79). Even though the Saguntines do not act upon the instructions of Tisiphone until she possesses them,

¹⁸ Cf. Hardie (1993a) 82.

her role is essentially the same as Fides—to incite the Saguntines to destruction. Even though the goddesses oppose each other, they are unwitting associates in death. Tisiphone inspires the Saguntines to new heights of honour, and in a state of *furor* they resolve to die rather than to prolong their lives with dishonour. Deceived and possessed by the fury, the Saguntines commit suicide en masse, the act and aftermath of which is described in the rest of book 2 (614–707).¹⁹ This scene is a prelude to the Capuan episode when a frenzied Fides and a fury combine to bring down and to destroy an already defeated populace (13.281–95).

Tisiphone's mission down to Saguntum seems to defeat the efforts of Fides to preserve the citizen's honour, as does the general description of suicide, fratricide, matricide, patricide and murder and the juxtaposition of gestures of devotion with acts of desecration (esp. *Pun.* 2.655–80). Silius places this general description between two passages that at first glance would appear to undermine this impression but upon closer examination can be seen to confirm it (612–13, 696–8).²⁰ The first passage reads: *inde opus aggressi, toto quod nobile mundo/aeternum inuictis infelix gloria seruat* ('Then they began a task that ill-starred glory keeps famous forever for unconquered peoples throughout the world', 612–13). This passage suggests that the actions of the Saguntines may be justified, whereas the inaction of the Romans has no defence. It is the fury who first commits a murder (614–16). It is she who forces the unwilling citizens to commit parricide against their will (617–19). Under her possession almost every possible parricide is committed (or suggested): fathers slay sons, sons fathers, sons mothers, husbands wives, wives husbands, brothers brothers, sisters siblings, twins twins, men and women themselves (614–49, 655–80).

Even though *Punica* 2.612–13 suggest the mass suicide of the Saguntines is honourable, the scene is similar to those in Lucan, *De Bello Civili* 2.148–59²¹ and Statius, *Thebaid* 5.207–61 in respect of the

¹⁹ The Saguntum suicide recalls numerous mass suicides in antiquity. Pritchett (1991) 219–23 collects fifteen examples of mass suicides in anticipation of defeat—slashing of throats, houses burned to the ground with families inside—that show that the fear of maltreatment by the conqueror was sufficient to produce such scenes of desperate self-immolation even without the religious conviction that motivated the defenders of Masada. On Roman cruelty toward the defeated, see Lintott (1968) 42–4.

²⁰ Cf. McGuire (1985) 67–70; McGuire (1990) 41; McGuire (1997) 215–18.

²¹ Cf. McGuire (1985) 72–3; McGuire (1990) 38–9; McGuire (1997) 213–14.

horrific nature of the crimes, the innominate scrambled corpses that litter the city, and (in *De Bello Civili* 2.156–7) in the conquered attempting to steal deaths from their conquerors. Lucan also refers to the Saguntines in *De Bello Civili* 3.342–57 when he shows the Massilians comparing their situation to that of Saguntum as they plead with Caesar to respect their neutrality. The mass suicide of 960 defenders at Masada in 73/74 CE, an incident that is graphically described by Josephus in the *Bellum Judaicum* (7.389–401), would not have been too long in the memory of Silius when he undertook the writing of the *Punica*. Silius takes the mass suicide of the Saguntines and makes it the climactic moment of the Saguntum episode, thereby further strengthening the close link between Saguntum and Rome. In the *Punica* Saguntum finally falls with the fury's attempt to pervert the aim of Fides, which in effect achieves the same goal of mass suicide. At the end of the episode the real Tiburna kills herself so that she can join the shade of her husband Murrus (2.665–80). The act seems ambiguous given that she rages like a fury to her husband's tomb before striking a Stoic pose at the moment of her suicide.

In personalising the scene of bloodshed and destruction, Silius graphically illustrates the consequences for the Saguntines not just of Carthaginian aggression but also of remaining true to Roman values and of experiencing Rome's betrayal through its inaction in the face of this aggression. He does this not by engaging in thematic discourse but by imaging a psychological narrative that manifestly exposes the horror experienced by the Saguntines. More than any other scene in the programmatic episode of the *Punica*, the function of the mass suicide indexes the ideological reality of *Romanitas*. This internecine reality recalls both Lucan's *De Bello Civili*, a historical poem with the theme of *bella plus quam civilia* ('war worse than civil', 1.1), as the central figures (Pompey and Caesar) were related by marriage, and Statius' *Thebaid*, a mythological poem with the theme of *fraternas acies* ('fraternal strife', *Theb.* 1.1), in which the main antagonists (Eteocles and Polynices) are related by birth. Statius praises Lucan for having composed the quintessential Roman epic (*Silv.* 2.7.48–53, esp. 52–3). For it is *De Bello Civili* and other epics like it that define the national consciousness of Rome. Although *De Bello Civili* looks back on and the *Thebaid* looks forward to the time of the second Punic war, the victims of the wars described in these epics endure a fate similar not only to the Saguntines but also to the victims of the republican civil wars alluded to in *Punica* 13.853–67. *De*

Bello Civili and the *Thebaid* provide illuminating contexts for reading the *Punica*, especially its programmatic episode.

The second passage that seems to undercut the portrayal of the actions of the Saguntines as honourable occurs at the end of the Saguntum episode. The fury returns to the underworld, having earned Juno's praise and having led a throng of Saguntines to their deaths (*Pun.* 2.693–5). Silius apostrophises the souls of the Saguntines: *at uos, sidereae, quas nulla aequauerit aetas, / ite, decus terrarum, animae, uenerabile uulgus, / Elysium et castas sedes decorate piorum* ('But you, starry souls, whom no age will ever match, go, glory of the earth, a venerable crowd, and adorn Elysium and the pure abodes of the pious', 696–8). This passage has been described as a beautiful encomium to the citizens of Saguntum,²² but there are some unsettling features to its lines. Tisiphone accompanies the souls of the Saguntines down to Hades, but Fides had promised to Hercules that she herself would lead them to the underworld; furthermore, Silius orders the shades to adorn Elysium (698), but just a few lines earlier Tisiphone leads them to Tartarus (695). The ambiguity of *sidereae animae* ('starry souls', 696–7) and their deeds is apparent. Silius indicates that 'no age will ever match' (*nulla aequauerit aetas*, 696) these souls, but it is not clear whether this is in respect of their star-like qualities or in their murderous acts, which in fact are inspired by Tisiphone and consign the souls to Tartarus rather than Elysium.²³ The complicity of Fides and Tisiphone seems to epitomise the paradoxicalness of the mass suicide, with the act being at least as abhorrent as it is noble on account of its parricidal aspect.²⁴ Silius actually draws attention to this aspect in his apostrophe of the Saguntine souls, which is an obvious echo of Statius' condemnation of Eteocles and Polyneices for their mutual fratricide in the *Thebaid*: *ite truces animae funestaque Tartara leto / polluite et cunctas Erebi consumite poenas!* ('Go, savage souls, and pollute dread Tartarus by your death, and exhaust all the punishments of Erebus', 11.574–5). The diction and phrasing of the Latin is much the same, although, of course, whereas Silius praises the Saguntine souls and

²² Fincher (1979) 42.

²³ McGuire (1985) 70; McGuire (1990) 39–40; McGuire (1997) 217.

²⁴ Feeney (1991) 307–8 maintains that the 'collective suicide is certainly a noble deed, as Silius shows with his apostrophe', but then proceeds to note the collaboration of Fides and Tisiphone and the paradoxical nature of the act. Cf. Hardie (1993a) 82.

directs them to Elysium, Statius damns the souls of the brothers on their descent to Tartarus.²⁵ But the reminiscence of the Statian passage precisely at the point where Silius praises the Saguntine souls weakens the laudatory effect of his apostrophe and suggests that suicide, a heroic Roman act of defying tyranny (cf., e.g., Sen. *Ira* 3.15.3–4; *Ep.* 13.14, 24.6–8, 70.14–16, esp. 15; *Cons. Marc.* 20.1–3), is in some respects ethically and morally dubious.

Writing Off Rome

Is Silius also making some comment about the actions, or rather inaction, of the Romans in the Saguntum episode? In not responding to the plea of its beleaguered ally for military assistance in the face of Carthaginian aggression, Rome in a sense is responsible for the destruction of Saguntum, a city that Silius represents in terms of Rome. A number of scholars argue that the hero of the *Punica* as a whole is Rome personified as Fides,²⁶ but Rome violates this faith in terms of its obligations to Saguntum. The Roman senate actually betrays the traditional values of *Romanitas* that Saguntum represents in their loyalty to and trust in Rome. Through their inaction, furthermore, the Romans actually set the course for Hannibal's eventual march upon their own city, just as Sicoris had warned (*Pun.* 1.646–52, esp. 651–2). It is not the first time that the Romans or their ancestors have betrayed an ally. Silius alludes to the *Aeneid* right at the beginning of the *Punica*. While Virgil writes *arma uirumque cano* ('I sing of arms and the man', *Aen.* 1.1) to begin the *Aeneid*, referring, of course, to the weapons and arms of Aeneas, Silius commences the *Punica* by writing *ordior arma* ('I begin the arms', *Pun.* 1.1) and continues with the words *quibus caelo se gloria tollit/Aeneadam patiturque ferox Oenotria iura/Carthago* ('by which the glory of the descendants of Aeneas raises itself to heaven and fierce Carthage submits to Oenotrian [i.e., Italian] laws', 1–3). This allusion to the *Aeneid* right at the beginning of the *Punica* immediately establishes a connection between Carthage and Rome and recalls the fate of such

²⁵ McGuire (1985) 70; McGuire (1990) 41.

²⁶ Cf. above, n. 6.

cities as Troy, from which Aeneas fled, and Ardea, burned by Aeneas, whose descendants had founded Saguntum, sacked by Hannibal.

The fate of Dido, who placed her trust in Aeneas and his Trojans, was betrayed, and died by her own hand, also looms large right from the very start of the *Punica*. Silius' reference to the Romans as *Aeneadae* ('descendants of Aeneas', *Pun.* 1.2; cf. 2.295), the reference to *Dardanus ductor* ('Dardanian general', 1.14; cf. 1.43, 486; 2.1, 336, 425), and the description of Dido's founding of Carthage (1.21–28) remind the reader at the outset of the mythological origins of the confrontation between Carthage and Rome (cf. 1.29–37, esp. 29–33). It is significant that the shield Hannibal is given by the people of Spain (2.395–52) shows Dido befriending Aeneas and being forsaken by him, causing her to commit suicide, a betrayal that sets the course of future enmity between Carthage and the *Aeneadae* (2.406–25).²⁷ Similarly, the Saguntines misplace their trust in the descendants of Aeneas, are abandoned, and are left with no alternative but to commit suicide.

Aeneas' betrayal of Dido was the first stage of the confrontation with Carthage, which commences militarily with Carthage's sacking of Saguntum and eventually ends with Rome's victory over Carthage, a victory that Silius himself looks upon as the beginning of Rome's decline into civil war and anarchy (cf. *Pun.* 13.853–69),²⁸ in a sense ironically to suffer a fate similar to that of Troy, Ardea, Saguntum and Carthage. When Fides flees the earth because of the depravity of the human race (2.496–506), the tyranny of its rulers and the violence of its nations are emphasised:

impia liqui
et, quantum terrent, tantum metuentia regna
ac furias auri nec uilia praemia fraudum
et super haec ritu horrificos ac more ferarum
uiuentes raptō populos luxuque solutum
omne decus multaque oppressum nocte pudorem.
uis colitur, iurisque locum sibi uindicat ensis,
et probri cessit uirtus.

(Silius Italicus, *Punica* 2.498–505)

²⁷ For discussions of Hannibal's shield, see Frank (1947) 840–41; von Albrecht (1964b) 173–5; Vessey (1975) 391–405.

²⁸ Cf. Häußler (1978) 208; McGuire (1985) 9; Ahl *et al.* (1986) 2502; Feeney (1991) 302 n. 2.

I fled from
 evil reigns that fear as much as they terrify,
 the madness for gold, the cheap rewards of deceit,
 and moreover reigns that are hateful in their customs and that
 live in the manner of wild beasts, where honour is weakened
 by luxury and where shame is buried in the darkest night.
 Force is worshipped and the sword takes the place of justice,
 and virtue has given place to shameful acts.

The *Zeitgeist* of Lucan's *De Bello Civili* and Statius' *Thebaid*—the atmosphere of violence, greed and fear—permeates these lines and is mirrored in the accounts by the ancient historians and biographers of the civil wars at Rome during the first centuries BCE and CE. It is exemplified elsewhere in the *Punica*, significantly just before the disaster at Cannae (8.243–57) and in the sibyl's prophecy of the death of Hannibal (13.853–67). The Roman defeat at Cannae is precipitated by the election of Terentius Varro to the consulship (8.243–57), which is portrayed by Silius as the representation and precursor of civil discord:

subnixus raptō plebei muneris ostro
 saeuit iam rostris Varro ingentique ostro
 festinans aperire locum fata admouet urbi.
 atque illi sine luce genus surdumque parentum
 nomen, at immodice uibrabat in ore canoro
 lingua procax. hinc auctus opes largusque rapinae,
 infima dum uulgi fouet oblatratque senatum,
 tantum in quassata bellis caput extulit urbe,
 momentum ut rerum et fati foret arbiter unus,
 quo conseruari Latium uictore puderet.
 hunc Fabios inter sacrataque nomina Marti
 Scipiadas interque Ioui spolia alta ferentem
 Marcellum fastis labem suffragia caeca
 addiderant, Cannasque malum exitiale fouebat
 ambitus et Graio funestior aequore Campus.

(Silius Italicus, *Punica* 8.243–57)

Meanwhile Varro rants from the rostrum, bolstered by the purple seized by the gift of the people, and rushing to create an occasion for massive ruin brings the city near its end. His family lacked distinction; his parents' name was never heard. But his insolent tongue flapped ceaselessly in a droning voice. He gained wealth in this way and was generous with his plunder; he courted the dregs of the mob and raged at the senate, until he rose so high in the war-torn city that he was the cause of events and the sole arbiter of Rome's fate,

although Latium might feel shame to be saved by this victor. Blind voters had given him, that disaster for the Fasti, a place among the Fabii and the Scipios, whose names are sacred to Mars, and Marcellus, who gave his lofty spoils to Jove. Bribery and the Field of Mars, more deadly than any Greek land, caused the ruinous disaster of Cannae.

Here Silius suggests that the seeds of Roman civil war were sown during the war with Hannibal when a demagogue such as Varro managed to attain the same political rank as the Fabii, the Scipios and Marcellus. This theme of civil strife goes back, however, as far as the very foundation of Rome, as the founding of Rome upon Romulus' slaying of Remus seemed to later Romans to foredoom her to eternal civil strife (cf. Hor. *Epod.* 7.17–20; Livy 1.6.4–2.7.3). But it also looks forward to the Rome of Silius' day, since the theme of fraternal strife in the imperial house was a political *locus communis* for civil discord in the first century. According to Tacitus, Romans condoned Nero's murder of Britannicus because of the ancient examples of fraternal strife and the infeasibility of dividing the throne (*Ann.* 13.17). Silius picks up on this theme in depicting discord between senators (e.g., Lentulus and Fabius), generals (e.g., Fabius and Minucius) and consuls (e.g., Varro and Paullus) in the *Punica*. Silius even provides a solution to the Roman custom of power-sharing after Fabius is compelled to share his dictatorial powers and army with Minucius (*Pun.* 7.494–516). When Minucius and his forces are rescued by Fabius in an ensuing battle, Minucius gratefully returns command of his portion of the army to Fabius (565–70).

According to von Albrecht, Saguntum is another Troy, Rome another Troy or an anti-Troy.²⁹ Rome too becomes another Ardea and another Carthage. But the most significant identification in the *Punica* is between Saguntum and Rome. The Saguntines embody traditional Roman qualities from an earlier period of Rome's history and suffer a fate similar to the one that besets Rome in the civil wars mentioned by Silius in *Punica* 13, in which the sibyl prophesies the civil wars of the 80s and 40s BCE featuring the antagonists Marius and Sulla (853–60) and then Pompey and Caesar (861–7) respectively:

²⁹ Von Albrecht (1964b) 172–83; cf. Hardie (1993a) 81–2.

hic Marius: nec multa dies iam restat ituro
 aetheriam in lucem. ueniet tibi origine parua
 in longum imperium consul; nec Sulla morari
 iussa potest, aut amne diu potare soporo;
 lux uocat et nulli diuum mutabile fatum.
 imperium hic primus rapiet, sed gloria culpae,
 quod reddet solus, nec tanto in nomine quisquam
 existet, Sullae qui se uelit esse secundum.
 ille hirta cui subrigitur coma fronte, decorum
 et gratum terris magnus caput. ille deum gens,
 stelligerum attollens apicem, Troianus Iulo
 Caesar auo. quantas moles, cum sede reclusa
 hinc tandem erumpent, terraque marique mouebunt!
 heu miseri, quotiens toto pugnabitis orbe!
 nec leuiores lues quam uictus crimina, uictor.

(Silius Italicus, *Punica* 13.853–67)

Here is Marius: it is not long before he will rise to the upper world. From humble origins he will rule for long as consul. Nor is Sulla able to delay following the orders or drink long from the river of forgetfulness. Life calls him and the fate that none of the gods can change. This man will be the first to seize supreme command, but guilty though he is, he alone will resign it. Nor will any man who attains such power be willing to follow Sulla's lead. That handsome head pleasing to the world is that of Magnus, with its shaggy hair rising from the forehead. The other, whose head bears a starry crown, is Trojan Caesar, the offspring of gods and descendant of Iulus. When they break forth at last, freed from their underworld seclusion, they will shake hard the earth and sea! Ah, wretched men, how often you will fight throughout the whole world! Nor will you, victor, pay less lightly for crimes than the vanquished.

Silius seems to suggest that history never changes: 'it merely repeats itself in cyclical fashion. Cities (Troy, Alba Longa, Ardea, Saguntum, Carthage) come and go; only the names change. Time present and time future are contained in time past. As Fabius himself observes, 'Fortune never embraces anyone forever' (*non ulla perenni/ amplexu Fortuna fouet*, *Pun.* 7.244–5). In Petronius' *Satyricon* Eumolpus recites a mini-epic on the civil war of 49–45 BCE between Caesar and Pompey's forces (119–24) in which Fortune decrees and ensures that an arrogant, corrupted Rome has her day of reckoning on the blood-drenched fields of civil war in the republic (120–4). It has been argued that Silius does not relate the sibyl's vision of the future in

Punica 13.853–67 to Scipio's present.³⁰ But in this passage the sibyl pointedly remarks that 'you, victor [Caesar], will pay no less lightly for crimes than the vanquished [Pompey]' (*nec leuiora lues quam uictus crimina, uictor*, 867), a warning that seems applicable at least to some degree to the Romans of Scipio's day. In his preface to the *Punica* Silius echoes Livy 21.1.1–3 in his observation that 'those who were given victory came nearer to ruin' (*propiusque fuere periculo, / quis superare datum*, *Pun.* 1.13–14). Although this statement could naturally mean that Rome emerged victorious despite almost being defeated by Hannibal, the question also arises as to when Rome came closer to destruction—before or after her defeat of Carthage? Sallust observes that the victory over Carthage marked the beginning of a decline in Roman fortune and morals (*Cat.* 10). Velleius Paterculus remarks similarly that Rome's victory hastened the abandonment of her traditional virtues and disciplines (2.1–2). After describing the defeat of the Roman army at Cannae, Silius apostrophises Carthage: *haec tum Roma fuit. post te cui uertere mores / si stabat fatis, potius, Carthago, maneres* ('This was the Rome of that age. If fate was fixed that our nature should change after you fell, Carthage, would that you still remained', *Pun.* 10.657–8; cf. 3.588–90). By placing this apostrophe not only at the close of the section describing Rome's greatest military defeat but also at the end of the tenth book, Silius stresses the significance of the victory for Rome's decline in national character. Carthage is ruined militarily by defeat but Rome is ruined morally by victory.

According to Cicero, the seeds of civil war during the republic are situated in the abandonment of Rome's policy and custom of waging war in the interest of its allies, its oppression of and triumph over nations that had once helped Rome to victory over its enemies outside Italy, and its failure to punish the crimes of powerful individuals who had abused their political and military powers (*Off.* 2.8.26–9). Mithridates in Sallust's *Historiae* (4.69.5–9, 17, 21) and Ariovistus in Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum* (1.36, 44; cf. 35, 40, 43) comment variously on the Roman practice of destroying allies and dictating the terms of friendship. Given that Rome's failure to defend Saguntum militarily is represented primarily as an act of self-preservation, the

³⁰ Horsfall (1995) 291.

seeds of the civil wars and attendant moral decline in the *Punica* would appear to lie not as much in Rome's abandonment of her ally as in the Roman envoys' belligerent approach before the Carthaginian senate, Fabius' manifest eagerness for war after his demands are rejected, the self-interest of Rome evident as a whole in the Saguntum episode, and the lack of reference in the text to any compassion on the part of the Romans after news of Saguntum's fall reaches Rome. Scholars have maintained that there is nothing in the sibyl's vision (*Pun.* 13.853–67) to take the reader into the imperial period,³¹ but these qualities are reflected in other poetic representations of Rome, for example, those of Virgil and Lucan, and historical accounts, for example, of Sallust and Tacitus, which describe civil war and moral decline at Rome during the empire.

The opening, programmatic episode of the *Punica* is significant in the way that it encourages the reader to look for the exemplification of Rome and *Romanitas*. In the *Punica* Rome survives to fight another day, but her geopolitical self-interest, martial fervour, diplomatic belligerence and lack of human compassion allow her to triumph and to maintain her hegemony over her allies and rivals. This is the true index of Rome and the reader is encouraged to look for such instances throughout the *Punica*. There is not the same degree of pretence as there is in the *Aeneid* that the present and future are founded on a glorious sense of Rome's divine mission. Instead Silius takes care to portray Saguntum as a collective model of idealised *Romanitas* and its paradoxical nature through its citizens' steadfast loyalty to Rome. The Saguntines are important in the *Punica* not on account of their nationality but rather for their exemplification of traditional Roman values they hold dear, the upholding of which actually leads to their destruction when Rome abandons them. These are values that apparently have less relevance in the age of Rome that Silius describes. Silius himself was not immune to the effects of civil war that Tacitus describes in his account of the year of four emperors (*Hist.* 1–4), which was only a year after Silius assumed the consulship in 68 CE. Like Silius himself, a Neronian consul living in the age of Trajan (cf. Pliny 3.7.9–11), true *Romanitas* in the antiquarian *Punica* is an anachronism, a concept belonging to an earlier age. The Saguntum

³¹ Ahl *et al.* (1986) 2552–3.

episode proves program not just to Silius' epic narrative but to the reception of that narrative in history. *Punica* 1 and 2 suggest the truth of Rome and the failure of idealised *Romanitas*. Silius Italicus' mastery of the epic form as portrayed in the Saguntum episode is a function of his vision of political and ideological reality.³²

³² Earlier versions of this chapter were delivered on 27 June 2000 at the 14th Annual Pacific Rim Roman Literature Seminar held at the University of Tasmania, Australia and on 29 November 2000 at the Faculty of Classics Literary Seminar in the University of Cambridge, England. I wish to thank John Henderson, who pointed out the general resemblance between the Plataea and Saguntum episodes; David Konstan, who drew my attention to numerous examples of mass suicides in antiquity; and Anthony Boyle, who suggested the programmatic nature of the Saguntum episode.

18. THE EMPEROR'S *SATURNALIA*:
STATIUS, *SILVAE* 1.6

Carole E. Newlands

Despite recent critical interest in Statius' *Thebaid*, Statius' *Silvae*, his four books of short poems written chiefly in praise of patrons living in the age of Domitian, have been derided for their 'mannerist style' and, in particular, for their seeming adulation of Domitian.¹ In a sense, the *Silvae* have shared in the posthumous condemnation of Domitian, for the hostile tradition about this emperor propagated by the influential writings of Pliny and Tacitus has caused Statius' poems to be viewed as the decadent product of a decadent regime. But the *Silvae* are works of Statius' maturity, written largely after the completion of his *Thebaid*.² Moreover, along with the epigrams of Martial, Statius' *Silvae* are our only contemporary witnesses to the age of Domitian. Since they describe its monuments, its entertainments, its households, and its court, the *Silvae* are important social as well as literary productions. They deserve reconsideration for what they reveal about imperial topography, art, and ceremonial, as well as about social and political conditions. Significantly too, these poems give voice to the hopes, desires, and anxieties of an age in which government took on the dramatically new face of a divine monarchy.

Indeed, the *Silvae* are worth careful investigation for the insight they offer into the conditions of speech under imperial autocracy. Although he encouraged the arts, the emperor Domitian seems to have actively suppressed free speech, particularly towards the end of his reign—the period in which the *Silvae* were published.³ If we ascribe some value to Tacitus' remark at the start of the *Agricola* that

¹ The term 'mannerist' was given currency in literary criticism by Curtius (1953) 273–301. On its applicability to Statius, see Vessey (1973) 7–14; Vessey (1986b) 2757–60.

² The first collection of the *Silvae*, comprising books 1–3, was published in 93 CE; book 4 was published separately in 95 CE, and book 5 was published posthumously. The *Thebaid* was published around 92 CE. On the dating of the publication of the *Silvae*, see Coleman (1988) xvi–xx.

³ See Coleman (1986) 3095–115.

the most dangerous kind of literature in Domitian's Rome was panegyric (1–2), then the *Silvae* are obvious poems through which to explore the social function of praise poetry in an autocratic age. They are a key witness to the political ideology of Flavian Rome and to the poet's complex relationship with imperial power.

In *Silvae* 1.6 the poet describes a public celebration, the entertainment—gifts, a banquet, and spectacular shows—provided by the emperor for the people on the occasion of the *Saturnalia*. Here for the first time in the *Silvae* Statius brings the emperor himself into the public arena, where his power is displayed not in a colossal statue, as in *Silvae* 1.1, but in his social interactions with his people. The amphitheatre itself, which may well have been the Colosseum, is not described.⁴ The idea of the emperor is examined here through spectacle rather than through architecture.

Statius' *Silvae* have generally fallen into the opposing categories of either flattery or subversion.⁵ I wish to approach *Silvae* 1.6, however, with the assumption that Statius' praise of Domitian here is neither servile nor feigned. In *Silvae* 1.6 Domitian is presented largely from the point of view of the audience, who enthusiastically respond to him in the complementary roles of benefactor and god. Yet the wonder and awe that Domitian engenders in his audience also points to the ambiguity inherent in a power that transgresses human norms. This ambiguity is part of a larger response to the increasing autocracy of Domitian's government and the expansion of the imperial office into a divine monarchy.⁶

In particular, *Silvae* 1.6 explores the imperial appropriation of the discourse of popular liberty. Domitian's games, so we are told, celebrate the *Saturnalia*. Thus *Silvae* 1.6 uses two politically, highly charged occasions—the games and the *Saturnalia*—to scrutinise the ideology of divine kingship on which Domitian based his rule, in particular the 'divine' right the emperor assumes at the Saturnalian feast to

⁴ Likewise Martial's *Liber de Spectaculis*, written to celebrate the inaugural games in the Colosseum, focusses on the entertainment, not on the amazing new building. The seventh *Eclogue* of Calpurnius Siculus, on the other hand, uses the architecture of the amphitheatre as a metaphor for imperial power.

⁵ This is most clearly illustrated by the opposing interpretations of *Silvae* 1.1 offered by Ahl (1984a) 91–102 and Geyssen (1996) *passim*.

⁶ As Millar (1977) 3 observes, the transformation of the emperor from *princeps* to Hellenistic king was not interrupted by 'good' emperors such as Trajan or Marcus Aurelius.

control his people's *libertas*. Indeed, as we shall see, in *Silvae* 1.6 the emperor's control over the *Saturnalia* is examined from two points of view, that of the adoring audience and, at the poem's end, that of the master-poet who resists absorption by the crowd and anxiously seeks personal *libertas* through his own fashioning of the emperor's feast.

Controlling Time

Any approach to *Silvae* 1.6 and Domitian's Saturnalian games is undoubtedly complicated by the strongly expressed view of imperial writers such as Juvenal and Tacitus that spectacle in the form of games served as a sop to a servile nation. According to Tacitus, the *plebs* along with the worst of slaves were upset by Nero's death because of their addiction to the circus and theatres (*Hist.* 1.4.14–16). The subject of ceremonial, however, has come to be seen by modern critics as fundamental to an understanding of the political process and the structure of power.⁷ As David Cannadine observes, ceremonial and spectacle centred around a monarch or an emperor 'seem to confirm consensus, to disguise conflict, and to support both hierarchy and community'.⁸ Spectacle was integral to the monarchical or imperial process, for by impressing and captivating the people, it persuaded them to acquiesce in a political system where power was unevenly distributed. The political cannot then be separated from the spectacular. As Cannadine well puts it, 'politics and ceremonial are not separate subjects, the one serious, the other superficial. Ritual is not the mask of force, but is itself a type of power'.⁹

The political authority of the Roman emperors was committed to impressive display, and the theatre or amphitheatre provided the preferred stage for the dazzling display of statecraft. The games provided an opportunity not just for popular entertainment but for the giving of gifts. Paul Veyne has argued that visual display of majesty alone was not enough to please the populace; rather, at the games the emperor had to earn the acclamation of the crowd through his

⁷ For a fine discussion of the importance of the study of ceremonial to historians and anthropologists, see the introductory essay of Cannadine (1987) 1–19.

⁸ Cannadine (1987) 15.

⁹ Cannadine (1987) 19.

spectacular benefactions. The putting on of shows, like the raising of public monuments, was an important means then by which the emperor could display what Veyne calls 'euergetism', his largesse to the Roman people.¹⁰

For Roman imperial writers, the theatre or amphitheatre was not only an important staging-ground for the dramatic confrontation of emperor and people; as Shadi Bartsch has argued, it provides literally and metaphorically a highly charged paradigm for the workings of imperial power.¹¹ In Pliny's *Panegyricus*, for instance, Domitian is represented through his games as an oppressive tyrant (33.3–4). His audience is riveted by fear, unable to express its true feelings under the sinister eye of an emperor who used his public appearances to scrutinise his audience for any sign of disloyalty or disrespect. In the *Agricola* Tacitus extends the theatrical paradigm to the political arena in general through his haunting portrait of Domitian 'as an observer who forces his audience to act against their will and who watches for their inadvertent betrayal of their true feelings'.¹²

In *Silvae* 1.6, however, Domitian is not represented as the brooding, suspicious tyrant of Pliny or Tacitus, master of a people enslaved against their will. Suetonius tells us that Domitian was particularly lavish in his production of games for the people (*Dom.* 4.1). And he was generous too in the gifts he gave at these shows, providing banquets and gifts of many kinds such as food and money (4.5). In *Silvae* 1.6 Domitian is represented largely from the point of view of the enthusiastic recipients of his bounty. According to the poem, the day's entertainment begins with a huge shower of sweetmeats upon the crowd, moves on to a free and bountiful banquet, and continues with a seemingly endless succession of lavish and novel shows, described by Statius as *nouosque luxus* ('new luxuries', 1.6.51); the continuance of the spectacle through the night, thanks to artificial illumination, is part of the unprecedented novelty of delights: *noctem enim illam felicissimam et uoluptatibus publicis inexpertam* ('that most felicitous of evenings, open to new public pleasures', 1 *praef.* 31–2). The free food and gifts, the novelty, the splendour, the rapid succession of entertainers, the extension of the shows into the night by seemingly

¹⁰ See Veyne (1990) 320–419.

¹¹ As Bartsch (1994) 31 argues, the theatre provides 'literally and figuratively a microcosm for the workings of power'.

¹² Bartsch (1994) 33.

magical means, all form visible proof of the emperor's munificence and superhuman capabilities.

In *Silvae* 1.6 then, Domitian, far from brooding over his people, maintains a godlike separation from them. He is presented as an emperor who fully understands the dynamics of the amphitheatre, a magnificent controller of the crowd and of his self-image as a divine being. The ceremonial games that take place on his *Saturnalia* provide a paradigm of empire that reinforces both community and hierarchy and asserts the stability of the regime. Domitian appears as the exemplary head of this spectacle of power, linking the earthly order with the heavenly order. Indeed, ceremonial presents Domitian as a god. As Niels Hannestad comments in his discussion of Flavian art and coinage, 'Domitian allowed himself to a far greater degree than his predecessors to be associated with the gods'.¹³ Coinage and monuments reflect Domitian's tendency to be elevated to a status far beyond that of ordinary mortals. Domitian, as Hannestad puts it, moved the emperor 'another rung up the ladder to the stars'.¹⁴

In *Silvae* 1.6 the amphitheatre is a microcosm of the world over which Domitian, as viceregent of Jupiter, rules. Domitian's claims to divinity are legitimised through the magnificence and novelty of the spectacle he provides his people. He himself is never described in this poem, a sign of his divinely transcendent state. Indeed, he is presented neither as an observer nor as the direct object of his people's gaze. This poem displays Domitian engaged in the cultivation of 'privileged visibility', a term I borrow from Stephen Greenblatt, who argues that the success of Elizabethan power depended upon histrionic display that, as in a theatre, both engaged the audience with the visible presence of monarchy and held them at a respectful distance.¹⁵ *Silvae* 1.6 presents Domitian as both a popular benefactor of his people and a figure of awesome, even fearsome majesty whose maintenance of a distance between himself and his subjects is crucial to his representation not as paranoid monster but as god.

Statius provides a particular angle on the games and on the notion of divine power by exploring in *Silvae* 1.6 the implication of their location on the *Saturnalia*, the day of popular liberty. This festival

¹³ Hannestad (1986) 140.

¹⁴ Hannestad (1986) 142.

¹⁵ Greenblatt (1988) 64.

was presumably an occasion when the emperor's authority could be tested to its limits.¹⁶ Mikhail Bakhtin viewed the *Saturnalia* as a paradigm of carnival, which he defined as an occasion of popular freedom that defied elite culture. Bakhtin idealised the carnival as a place where 'the voice of the people' could be heard without restraint, where bodily impulses and material pleasures could be frankly indulged: 'carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions'.¹⁷ During the period of the *Saturnalia* social and ethical rankings were abolished, and masters and slaves ate together at the communal feast. For Bakhtin, carnival was liberating in a broad sense, in that it made possible the scrutiny, mockery, and even subversion of social norms and institutions. The *Saturnalia* then was a potentially dangerous festival for an authoritarian elite.

Critics have, however, disputed Bakhtin's exuberant, utopian definition of the function of carnival on the grounds that it oversimplifies carnival as a site of communal celebration and ignores the spatial, temporal and legal constraints upon it.¹⁸ Carnival, for instance, is a time of licensed festivity.¹⁹ In *Silvae* 1.6, for instance, the emperor organises the entertainment for the *Saturnalia*, and he controls its time and place. Yet there remains general agreement, however, that carnival is a powerful ideological tool and analytical concept. This consensus is reflected by Barbara Myerhoff who, in arguing for the historical specificity of each instance of carnival, points out that it can be used to make a variety of statements about the social and political order: 'to affirm it, attack it, suspend it, redefine it, oppose it, buttress it, emphasize one part of it at the cost of another'.²⁰

¹⁶ On the Roman festival see Vollmer (1898) 304; Scullard (1981) 205–7.

¹⁷ Bakhtin (1968) 10.

¹⁸ For a discussion of critical attitudes to Bakhtin's formulation of carnival, see Stallybrass and White (1986) 1–31.

¹⁹ In his study of the festive in Greek and Roman religion, Kerenyi (1962) 49–70, esp. 64 has argued that the feast belongs to a stable patterns of religious events in which the festive is defined by the predictable alternation of complementary elements, the serious and the playful, the constrained and the free. According to Turner (1969) 166–203, esp. 176–8, this licensed alternation of constraint and freedom can be seen as a sign of social well-being; carnival is not destructive of social rules but offers a fresh perspective upon them.

²⁰ Myerhoff (1978) 235.

The association of the *Saturnalia* not only with social inversion but with popular *libertas* undoubtedly endowed this Roman festival with the potential to challenge imperial authority. It was for instance Britannicus' assumption of freedom of speech on the *Saturnalia* that led to his murder, for he misjudged his audience and sang bitterly in front of Nero of his exclusion from the throne (Tac. *Ann.* 13.15.2–3). *Silvae* 1.6 demonstrates the ways in which Domitian took control of this festival, using it to affirm his own supremacy before his people. The *Saturnalia* is called the emperor's *Saturnalia* (*Saturnalia principis*, 82), a resignification of the festival that buttresses the emperor's power over his people and calls into question the very notion of popular liberty that the festival traditionally promoted. Control of the *Saturnalia* gave the Flavian dynasty the ultimate form of cultural legitimacy. *Silvae* 1.6 then employs Domitian's Saturnalian feast to redefine in monarchical terms the social and political order at Rome.

Statius invokes Saturn on the Kalends, and in the preface refers to his poem as *Kalendae Decembres* (1 *prae*f. 31). But all our surviving calendars that preserve the month of December mark the seventeenth of December as the date for the *Saturnalia*.²¹ Macrobius, in his discussion of the origins of the *Saturnalia*, explains that the *Saturnalia* was often celebrated over three days from the fourteenth until the seventeenth of December, since the former was the date for the Numan calendar, the latter the date for the Julian calendar after Caesar added two days to the month (*Sat.* 1.10.2–18, 23). The emperor, it seems, has appropriated the *Saturnalia*, placing its celebration in the most prominent position of the month, the Kalends. The last month of the year could be seen then to open with Domitian, as the first month of the new year opened with the emperor involved in the inaugural ceremonies of office with Janus. This manipulation of the calendar was a skill Domitian had undoubtedly learned from Augustus, and it had the major ideological advantage of allowing the emperor to dominate the two major end points of time, as he dominates the two end points of Statius' first book.²²

Silvae 1.6 is our only evidence that Domitian perhaps changed the date of the *Saturnalia* and made it his own.²³ We do know however

²¹ See *ILLRP* 2.13.25, 83, 106, 199, 261.

²² On Augustus' manipulation of the Roman calendar to honour himself and his family, see Wallace-Hadrill (1987) 221–30.

²³ Vollmer (1898) 303–4, 310 assumes that the emperor's feast was separate from

of another change that Domitian made to the Roman calendar, a change that was cancelled after his assassination. Taking a leaf from Augustus' book and clearly signalling that he conceived of himself as Augustus' successor, Domitian named the months of September and October after himself, as *Germanicus* and *Domitianus* respectively (Suet. *Dom.* 13.3). The emperor's control over time was a firm mark of his divine authority, his power over both the human world of socially constructed points of celebration and the natural world of change and alteration. Moreover, the appropriation of the *Saturnalia* put Domitian fully in charge of the subversive tendencies of the winter feast. *Silvae* 1.6 rests upon the paradoxical notion that the emperor decides when and how the people's freedom is to be celebrated. In openly acclaiming their feast day as *Saturnalia principis* (82), the people in Statius' poem acknowledge the licensed and circumscribed nature of their festival.

As Richard Wilson points out in his discussion of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Foucault defines discourse as 'not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which struggle takes place'.²⁴ *Silvae* 1.6 explores the implications of Domitian's absolutism, his control of discourse, for the poet himself as well as for the people. As we shall see, Statius' presentation of imperial majesty in this poem goes beyond surface impressions of wonder and pleasure to examine the mechanisms that control and fashion both the imperial image and the people. In particular, the conjunction within the text of *Saturnalia* and imperial show strikingly reveals the temporal and spatial constraints upon the *Saturnalia*: the emperor decides both when and where the festival will be celebrated. This traditionally subversive festival is thus reshaped within the poem as an instrument of official authority. The *Saturnalia* tamed becomes a metaphor for imperial control. Yet the poem itself exists as a discursive site of both celebration of imperial authority and of resistance to it.

Silvae 1.6 is not, I claim, a subversive poem, a swan song to lost republican liberty. It focusses on the present, not on the past, and one of its major concerns is to redefine, through the emperor's

the 'real' Saturnalia. But the changing of the date is consistent with Domitian's attempt to rival Augustus – in the calendar, perhaps, as well as in building.

²⁴ Wilson (1987) 31–44, citing Foucault (1981) 52–3.

Saturnalia, the new social and political order under Domitian and the poet's place within it. Thus, although the poem celebrates the bounty and majesty of the emperor and his empire, it simultaneously reveals anxiety about the retaining of cultural autonomy, or some degree of control over discourse, in the face of a hierarchical and authoritarian imperial power. As we shall see, Statius examines the emperor's control over the *Saturnalia* from two points of view, that of the adoring audience and, at the poem's end, that of the master-poet who resists absorption by the crowd and anxiously seeks personal *libertas* through his own fashioning of the emperor's feast.

The Emperor's Feast

Like *Silvae* 1.5, *Silvae* 1.6 begins with formulae of exclusion that seem initially to assert the poet's authority over the stage-management of the proceedings:

Et Phoebus pater et seuera Pallas
et Musae procul ite feriatae:
Iani uos reuocabimus kalendis.
Saturnus mihi compede exsoluta
et multo grauidus mero December
et ridens Iocus et Sales proterui
adsint, dum refero diem beatum
laeti Caesaris. . . .²⁵

(Statius, *Silvae* 1.6.1–8)

Go far away and take a break, father Phoebus and stern Pallas and Muses: we will recall you on the Kalends of January. Come here, Saturn free of your fetters and December heavy with drinking and laughing Jocosity and wanton Wit, while I tell of the blessed day of Caesar when he was in jovial mood. . . .

Phoebus, Minerva and the Muses are banished in the opening two lines, and they are joined here by Janus, who will preside over the following month with Domitian (*Silv.* 4.1). Statius here invokes deities more congenial to his festive poem, Saturn and December, the namer of the festival along with his month, and the personifications, *Iocus*

²⁵ The text of the *Silvae* is that of Courtney (1992); translations are my own and have claims only to accuracy, not to elegance.

and *Sales*, who characterise the jovial nature of a holiday whose dominant feature Bakhtin describes as laughter.²⁶ The brisk hendecasyllables and the plural *Sales* suggest a jubilant conclusion to the first book of the *Silvae*. The *Saturnalia* was a carnivalesque occasion when the social hierarchy was overturned; the freeing of Saturn from his chains (*Silv.* 1.6.4) was an emblem of temporary popular freedom.²⁷ Nonetheless, the opening lines make clear that this is an occasion of *licensed* revelry; the day is Caesar's (1.6.8). Thus, despite the poet's opening gesture of control over his subject in his exclusion of unwanted deities from his poem, his person remains in the background until the poem's end; his viewing of the entertainments is not personalised by individual expressions of delight. The emperor instead dominates the poem. His presence is everywhere directly felt, but his actual person is nowhere described. He is the silent and invisible orchestrator of the show, the puppet-master pulling his people's strings. The strategy of 'privileged visibility' operates here largely through invisible presence. The power and the magnificence of the emperor are visually relayed through the splendour of his gifts and his shows. The notion of popular freedom with which the poem opens is thus offset by the persistent awareness throughout this poem of the emperor's unseen control over events, a sign of his powerful divinity. Although the emperor is referred to as *laetus* ('jovial', 1.6.8), there is no apparent personal relationship between him and the poet—the emperor is remote.

Yet the loss of personal liberty is compensated for by the lavish gifts Domitian showers upon his people, material and symbolic evidence of his care for them as well as proof of divine grandeur. Statius' account of the day's festivities, for instance, opens with exotic fruits and nuts falling, despite the lateness of the year, in abundance upon the people from a rope extended high above the amphitheatre (*Silv.* 1.6.9–20). The emperor's generosity to his people, an attribute of beneficent kingship, is orchestrated in marvellous ways that vie with or defy nature. The importance of the shower of gifts that begins the day's event lies, in Statius' interpretation, not so much in the demonstration of the emperor's empathy with his peo-

²⁶ Bakhtin (1968) 74–82.

²⁷ Macrobius provides a less provocative, naturalistic reason for the binding of Saturn's feet: it represents the ten-month binding of the child in the mother's womb (*Sat.* 1.8.5).

ple as in proof of his divinity and of the people's willing complicity in this imperial fiction. Domitian's shower of exotic gifts surpasses any mighty storm that Jupiter might send:

non tantis Hyas inserena nimbis
 terras obruit aut soluta Plias,
 qualis per cuneos hiems Latinos
 plebem grandine contudit serena.
 ducat nubila Iuppiter per orbem
 et latis pluuias minetur agris
 dum nostri Iouis hi ferantur imbres.

(Statius, *Silvae* 1.6.21–7)

The tempestuous Hyades and the rain-bearing Pleiades do not overwhelm the earth with such enormous stormclouds as were brought by the tempest that battered with pleasing hail the people ranged in their Roman ranks of seats. Let Jupiter cover the world with clouds and threaten the broad fields with downpour, provided rains like these are brought by our Jove.

Using the communal first person pronoun to identify his views with that of the audience, Statius calls Domitian *nostri Iouis* ('our Jupiter', 1.6.27). Domitian's two roles of benefactor and god here are combined: his style of giving positively identifies him as divine in nature. Here we have a demonstration of the mutuality involved in the fashioning of the emperor's divine image. For the Jovian ideology developed by Domitian is here confirmed by the popular interpretation of the shower of fruit and nuts as the gifts of the people's 'Jupiter'.²⁸

Like a god too, Domitian is invisible, not present to his people; his gifts come from on high, as if from the heavens. In choosing to identify Domitian with Jupiter in his particular aspect of god of weather, Statius suggests fear as well as wonder.²⁹ As Sauter has argued, the association of Jupiter with the weather gives this god a double existence: on the one hand threatening with thunder and lightning, on the other mild as when the sky is clear.³⁰ This duality,

²⁸ On the association that Domitian cultivated with Jupiter, see Fears (1981a) 3–141.

²⁹ There were other aspects of Jupiter more closely tied to statecraft and the wise guidance and protection of one's people. See Dio Chrys. *Or.* 37–47. On the specific identification of Domitian with the weather-god, see Sauter (1934) 62–4; for an overall discussion of the identification of Domitian with Jupiter see Sauter (1934) 54–78.

³⁰ Sauter (1934) 63.

translated into anthropomorphic terms, represents the emperor as a figure to be both feared and loved. As Fergus Millar observes, this duality was endemic to an imperial system that rested on the 'arbitrary exercise of power and favour on the one side, and that ever-present fear and uncertainty on the other'.³¹ The image of the vast storm in *Silvae* 1.6 represents the emperor's activities as both generous and excessive, for his storms outdo nature in their abundance and intensity. This intensity—the people are battered (*contudit*, *Silv.* 1.6.24) by the hail of sweetmeats—hints at the violence implicit in demonstrations of power. Like a god, Domitian showers benefactions, but in a form that reminds his people that, like Jupiter, he can also on other occasions wield the thunderbolt (cf. *Silv.* 3.3.158).

Domitian's superhuman authority is also conveyed through Statius' representation of his people's willing complicity in his development of a Jovian ideology. As we have seen, in Domitian's first action, the 'shower' of gifts, he is perceived as the earthly equivalent of Jupiter. This Jovian ideology is pursued in the depiction of the servants as Ganymedes (*Silv.* 1.6.34) and in the assertion that the lavish bounty that Domitian provides his people is superior to that of the first Golden Age:

i nunc saecula compara, Vetustas,
antiqui Iouis aureumque tempus:
non sic libera uina tunc fluebant
nec tardum seges occupabat annum.

(Statius, *Silvae* 1.6.39–42)

Come now, Antiquity; compare with our age the era of the ancient Jupiter and the times of gold: wine did not flow so freely then nor did the harvest outstrip the sluggish season.

The first Golden Age was under the province of Saturn ('the ancient Jupiter'), who brought the arts of agriculture to Italy (Macrob. *Sat.* 17.18–21). The depiction of Domitian as the new Jupiter asserts his superiority over the ancient Italian god; Domitian can alter the laws of nature by extending the time of harvest into winter (*Silv.* 1.6.42). Saturn is now allowed to appear unbound only on the day appointed by Domitian for his feast. Far from being a figure of unlimited freedom, the Saturn of *Silvae* 1.6, it turns out, has been resignified as an emblem of state-sponsored licence.

³¹ Millar (1977) 10.

Critics have drawn a sharp distinction between *Silvae* 1.6 and *Silvae* 4.2, the poem in which Statius is invited to dine with the emperor at his palace. In *Silvae* 4.2, so the argument runs, he appears in the poem as a remote, lofty figure in the intimidating Palatine, whereas in the earlier poem Domitian, true to the Saturnalian occasion, at least mingles with the people. I wish to argue that on the contrary, Domitian is consistently represented in *Silvae* 1.6 as a divine being of superhuman powers.³² Indeed, unlike in *Silvae* 4.2, the poet does not meet the emperor face to face; his presence is implied rather than visible. Domitian, it is true, does we are told join in the banquet:

una uescitur omnis ordo mensa,
parui, femina, plebs, eques, senatus:
et tu quin etiam (quis hoc uocari,
quis promittere possit hoc deorum?)
nobiscum socias dapes inisti.
iam se, quisquis is est, inops beatus,
conuiuam ducis esse gloriatur.

(Statius, *Silvae* 1.6.43–50)

Every rank—children, women, plebs, knights, and senators—are fed from one table: liberty has relaxed the rules of formal etiquette. And even you too (who of the gods could be summoned to this feast and could promise this?) you entered upon our communal feast with us. And now, whoever he is, a poor man or rich and boasts that he is his emperor's guest.

Domitian joins in the feast as a god, not as one of the people ready for a tub-thumping feast. Statius' language is reverent, almost incredulous that such a blessing could be granted. Indeed, the emperor's gracious bestowing of his presence upon the banquet again outdoes the actions of the gods: it is a blessing that none of the gods could promise (*Silv.* 1.6.45–6).³³ Rather than bringing himself down to the people's level, he gives them the temporary experience of divinity. Indeed, the very mention of *conuiuam* ('guest', 1.6.50) reminds us that the emperor is the host, a 'divine' being who orchestrates the people's

³² Thus Goddard (1994) 69–70, who argues that 'by graciously deigning to be present and to eat and drink alongside his subjects, Domitian displayed his "comitas," his affability, the positive virtue of condescending to associate so closely with the mass of his people'. See also Damon (1992) 301–8.

³³ *Beatus* ('blessed') is a term used to describe the blissful state of the gods or immortals (*OLD s.v. beatus*, 2).

entertainment, and who gives them the temporary delight of dining with divinity.

Statius' account of the shows that follow the banquet provides a vivid demonstration of the emperor's authority over nature, his power to transgress physical limits and categories within the confines of the amphitheatre. As Statius tells us in the preface to *Silvae* 1, Domitian thrills the people with a most happy night of untried, public delights (*noctem illam felicissimam et uoluptatibus publicis inexpertam*, 1 *praef.* 31–2). He offers the people a rapid succession of *nouosque luxus* ('novel luxuries', 1.6.51) such as women fighting women (52–6), dwarves fighting dwarves (57–64), and exotic entertainers from the margins of empire (70–4). The fighting dwarves and women may well have been criminals, enacting their punishment for the Roman people.³⁴ As White and Stallybrass observe, carnival often 'violently abuses and demonizes *weaker*, not stronger social groups—women, ethnic and religious minorities, those who "don't belong"—in a process of *displaced abjection*'.³⁵ The Roman people's pleasure in the somatic abnormalities of fighting women and foreshortened men is an instance of 'licensed complicity' with the emperor. Essentially, the people have substituted observation for participation, subjecting the exotic to their superior gaze.³⁶ The marginalisation of weaker social groups acts as a covert form of social control, uniting people with their leader in a reaffirmation of the dominant ideology of empire. Dwarves, fighting women, criminals—these represent the aberrant elements of society and are chaotic forces whose subjugation upholds the world-order ruled over by Domitian.

The amphitheatre itself provides a paradigm of empire: all classes, many races, packed into the enclosed circular space of a magnificent monument to popular entertainment. The superiority of the Romans to the conquered races is visually confirmed by the ranks of seats, enabling the spectators to observe the fruits of empire from on high. The exotic provenance of many of the performers puts empire on display, assuring the spectators of their right to enjoy and exploit its benefits and offerings. The social hierarchies among ranks and sexes that the *Saturnalia* dissolves does not extend to the performers, or

³⁴ On the theatrical enactment of criminal punishment, see Coleman (1990) 44–73.

³⁵ Stallybrass and White (1986) 19.

³⁶ On the superior, respectable gaze at the fair, see Stallybrass and White (1986) 42–3.

indeed to the exotic Ganymedes who serve the feast. The performers come from the far reaches of the Roman world, girls from Lydia, musicians from southern Spain, jugglers from Syria (*Silv.* 1.6.70–2), the servants Middle Eastern in appearance (34).

Their exotic provenance is matched by the birds that suddenly swoop down upon the people, flamingos from Egypt, pheasants from Phasis, and guinea-fowl from North Africa (*Silv.* 1.6.75–8). The birds are seized as another form of novelty:

desunt qui rapiant, sinusque pleni
gaudent dum noua lucra comparantur.

(Statius, *Silvae* 1.6.79–80)

There are not enough to grab, and the people exult, their laps full, while going after fresh plunder.

The seizing of the birds is an action that visibly articulates an idea of empire based upon the dominance and social superiority of the Roman race. The world is the people's for the taking—especially if the emperor arranges it. Competition is purely material, not social or political, as people struggle to seize the prizes. Because the emperor makes available for his people the fruits of empire, Domitian and his people are bound together in licensed complicity. The emperor's *Saturnalia* lavishly provides the material pleasures associated with the popular festival, and it compensates for loss of individual liberties by confirming the superiority of the Roman race.

The arrival of the exotic birds in Roman skies also demonstrates the emperor's power over nature, his ability to confuse categories and reshape them to his own needs. The most vivid demonstration of this aspect of his power occurs as night is falling. Suetonius tells us that Domitian introduced the novelty of staging gladiatorial shows at night by the illumination of torches (*Dom.* 4.1). Statius describes the wonders of artificial illumination not in practical terms but in a striking image that attempts to recapture the marvellous visual effect of this spectacle upon the observers:

vixdum caerulea nox subibat orbem,
descendit media nitens harena
densas flammeus orbis inter umbras
uincens Cnosiacae facem coronae.
conlucet polus ignibus nihilque
obscurae patitur licere nocti.

(Statius, *Silvae* 1.6.85–90)

Night was hardly beginning to cover the world, there descends in the middle of the arena amidst the thick shadows a dazzling, flaming ball, outdoing the fire of the Cretan Crown. The entire sky is ablaze with fire, and shadowy night is permitted no entry at all.

Statius describes the sudden arrival of artificial light from the point of view of a spectator for whom, in the clamour and confusion of the ever-changing shows, a burning orb of light miraculously descends out of the darkness, burning more brightly than a constellation. The amphitheatre, presented at the poem's start as a microcosm of the earth ruled by Jupiter, is yet again subject to divine, mysterious power as a constellation itself it seems is brought to earth in a striking inversion of the natural hierarchy.³⁷ The poem, and the entertainment, climax at this point with an incontrovertible demonstration of imperial power. The emperor, it seems, can transgress the laws of nature itself. Saturnalian inversion has become a function of the emperor's authority.

Like the grand 'rainstorm' of sweetmeats with which the shows and *Silvae* 1.6 begin, the descent of the 'flaming orb' into the arena seems to me a strategy fully implicated in the theatrical production of 'salutary anxiety'. The sudden descent to earth of a flaming light that outshines a constellation is an event productive of both fear and awe.³⁸ This final demonstration of the emperor's power dramatises an important strategy through which he controls his people. The theatre of his majesty depends not simply on his physical presence but on dramatic, symbolic acts that create both fear and wonder; they demonstrate his existence above human and even natural law, his power to create and unite a new heavenly and earthly order. The emperor's majesty is inseparable from the notion of force, contained on the particular day on which the emperor is *laetus* ('jovial', *Silv.* 1.6.8) but expressed through dramatic symbolism. As Greenblatt remarks, a ruler's authority depends on both fear and beneficence: 'if there were only fear, the prince, it was said, would be deemed a tyrant; if there were only mercy, it was said that the people would

³⁷ For the myth of Ariadne's Crown, see Ov. *Fast.* 3.359–516; Bömer (1958) 174–5 *ad* 3.459–60.

³⁸ Lucan (1.75–6) describes the descent of stars to earth as part of the Stoic cataclysm. Seneca (*Q. Nat.* 7.20.2) says that everyone is 'amazed' (*stupent*) at the phenomenon of sudden fire streaking down from the heavens and, despite the simple physical cause, regards such manifestations as a miracle.

altogether cease to be obedient'.³⁹ The flaming heavenly orb is a striking icon of the essential ambiguity of imperial power.

Up until this point in the poem, Statius has presented himself through the use of the first person plural pronoun as one of the crowd, a typical spectator.⁴⁰ His emotional responses are not separated from those of the people. It is their common responses and perceptions that he presents. Whether he towers over Rome in the symbolic form of an equestrian statue or orchestrates the people's games, in the *Silvae* the emperor is constructed as a remote figure whose control of his people is paramount. The climax of Calpurnius' *Eclogue 7* is the rustic Corydon's vision of the emperor, viewed from a respectful distance (79–84). The climax of *Silvae* 1.6 is not the emperor himself but a supernatural symbol of his power. The precise workings of imperial power are invisible to the people; only its marvellous effects are to be seen. As a god, Domitian is an absent presence. Statius' voice is almost entirely absorbed in the common one of a people who react to the emperor's gifts as divine blessings.

Indeed, Statius demonstrates the audience's enthusiastic response to the shows through a brief anecdote. The people praise Domitian to the skies and acclaim him as *dominus* ('master'), a title we are told that the emperor forbade them to use:

tollunt innumeras ad astra uoces
Saturnalia principis sonantes
et dulci dominum fauore clamant:
hoc solum uetuit licere Caesar.

(Statius, *Silvae* 1.6.81–4)

They raise innumerable voices to the stars, trumpeting the *Saturnalia* of the *princeps* and shouting 'master' as a sign of their loving favour. This licence alone Caesar forbade.

The title *dominus* when applied to the emperor was controversial. Suetonius tells us that Domitian liked being acclaimed *dominus* on his feast days (*Dom.* 13.1). And he sees Domitian's introduction of the title *dominus et deus* ('master and god') as a sign of arrogance (*Dom.* 13.2).⁴¹ Hannestad argues that the title reveals the development

³⁹ Greenblatt (1988) 137; cf. Millar (1977) 10.

⁴⁰ Domitian is *nostri Iouis* ('our Jupiter', 1.6.26); he joins *nobiscum* ('with us') in the feast (48).

⁴¹ On the ambiguous connotations of the phrase, see Dominik (1994b) 58–60.

that had occurred since Augustus. The emperor now ruled over his subjects not as 'first citizen' among equals, but as master over slaves, god over worshippers.⁴² Yet Statius' poem tells us that the people used this title against Domitian's wishes. Does Statius here hint at a feigned modesty on the part of the emperor? The incident, I suggest, is provocative rather than subversive. Statius represents the popular acclamation as voluntary, a sign of the people's 'loving favour' (*dulci fauore*, *Silv.* 1.6.83).⁴³ This phrase suggests that the term *dominus* can be interpreted in the light of the exchange between ruler and ruled that is enacted in the amphitheatre, indicating the people's 'liberty' to endow their favour on the emperor in grateful exchange for his benefactions.⁴⁴

All the same, the people's acclamation also strikingly reveals the paradox implicit in the occasion, the *Saturnalia*, festival of popular freedom. For the voluntary acclamation of *dominus* strikingly acknowledges the people's willing acceptance of the emperor's control over their festival, his success in bringing about communal support. The people's use of the term *dominus* on the *Saturnalia*, the one occasion of the year when hierarchical distinctions could be abolished, dramatises both the emperor's control of the festival and the people's complicity—for it is they who acclaim that the *Saturnalia* is the emperor's. And there is of course a further paradox in that the word for emperor here is *principis* ('first citizen', *Silv.* 1.6.82). The phrase *Saturnalia principis* expresses the startling resignification of a festival of popular liberty, charting the distance Romans have travelled from the concept of emperor as first citizen to divine, supremely controlling being.

Statius' Feast

Yet, although he may express popular sentiment, Statius does so in a unique way. He matches the novelty of the emperor's shows with the novelty of his own verse. With the use of the swift-moving hen-

⁴² Hannestad (1986) 141.

⁴³ Hopkins (1983) 15 n. 23 has acknowledged that we do not know enough about the history of imperial 'acclamation' to determine normal practice. Many of the incidents reported concern 'acclamation' that was on command. The 'acclamation' of *Silv.* 1.6, however, is represented as spontaneous and indeed against the emperor's orders.

⁴⁴ Thus *OLD s.v. fauor*, 1c: 'goodwill, favour . . . shown in recognition of merit'.

decasyllables, Statius wittily accomplishes his own literary inversions, for he plays with epic language throughout his poem and creates a novel and humorous tension between metrical form and style.⁴⁵

The day for instance opens in epic manner with the stately introduction of Aurora (*Silv.* 1.6.9), followed by the 'storm' that involves obvious play with epic imagery.⁴⁶ In the shows themselves, epic matter is played upon in the carnivalesque inversions of the spectacle. Thus the grotesquery of the fighting between the women is magnified by the epic simile comparing them to Amazons (1.6.55–6); the fight of the dwarves plays with scale in its epic personification of *cruenta Virtus* ('bloodied Courage') who, along with Mars, laughs at the flying of tiny fists (62); and this fight is followed by a Homeric allusion to the hostility between pygmies and cranes (*Silv.* 1.6.63–4; cf. *Il.* 3.3–7).

The fights, comically reminiscent of the larger epic world, replay specifically the dualism of the *Thebaid* as entertainment. *Cruenta Virtus* undoubtedly refers to the gladiatorial nature of the grotesque combats and, presumably, to the killing that results. Yet this personification, along with Mars, keeps unusual company amongst the human performers. Indeed, *Virtus* is a personification drawn specifically from Statius' *Thebaid* and is described by Feeney as highly indecorous whenever she appears in the epic.⁴⁷ She is part of Bacchus' drunken, staggering train in *Thebaid* 4.661–3 and appears as a figure of comic and failed transformation into an advertisement for peace in *Thebaid* 10.639–49. Yet *Virtus* is also aptly called *cruenta* ('bloodied'), for as Feeney observes, in the *Thebaid* she is closely akin with Death; her appearance in the epic invites a re-evaluation of the conventional Roman conception of *Virtus* as glorious courage in battle.⁴⁸

The presence of *Virtus* as the inciter of dwarves and women in Statius' textualised amphitheatre provides a comic inversion of her Roman meaning at the same time as it points to Statius' management of spectacle in his own familiar epic terms. Thus on the literary level elite categories are challenged and overturned, as the

⁴⁵ Damon (1992) 304 has argued that the use of hendecasyllables for poems of imperial praise does not necessarily imply irreverence. This metre, however, does draw attention to the independence, if not irreverence, of the poet.

⁴⁶ The *Thebaid* of course, like the *Aeneid*, opens with a storm (*Theb.* 1.336–89; *Aen.* 1.34–156).

⁴⁷ On 'Virtus' in the *Thebaid*, see Feeney (1991) 382–5; Dominik (1994b) 52f.

⁴⁸ Feeney (1991) 383.

themes of epic—storms, war, courage—are re-evaluated through the material, the marginal, and the grotesque.

Nonetheless there is an uneasy disjunction between the laughter of Virtus (*ridet*, *Silv.* 1.6.62) and her epithet *cruenta*, a term that makes her here, as in the *Thebaid*, a problematic figure, incompletely resignified as jovial. Her presence, along with that of Mars, suggests a wider world of unrest and violence that the games work to contain through fantasy. Although such literary inversion then reflects in part the jovial nature of the occasion of the feast, it also allows the poet a degree of freedom in his representation of a day of *libertas* that seems so firmly in the emperor's control. Thebes, despite its comic dress here, provides an alternative story of a different social order, one based on conflict and dynastic instability. That story provides a salutary reminder both of the need for community and consensus and of the troubling, institutional vulnerability of monarchical systems of rule.

In form and style then, the poet carves out his own literary space, in a sense rewriting his own Theban subject as popular entertainment. But so overwhelming are the emperor's benefactions that after the description of the pyrotechnics, the poem ends in an extraordinary way with a delayed *recusatio*. The poet becomes so sleepy with wine, he tells us, that he breaks off the poem abruptly at its nocturnal climax of the shows:

quis spectacula, quis iocos licentes,
quis conuiuia, quis dapes inemptas,
largi flumina quis canat Lyaei?
iamiam deficio tuaque Baccho
in serum trahor ebrius soporem.

(Statius, *Silvae* 1.6.93–7)

Who could sing of the spectacles, the licentious jests, the feasting, the free banquets, the rivers of abundant wine? Now indeed I falter and inebriated I am dragged by Bacchus to a late sleep.⁴⁹

The poet has said very little about himself in this poem. He has acted as an observer of the proceedings, not as a participant, and he has expressed the feelings of the spectators as a group, rather than as an individual. But now at the poem's end he draws atten-

⁴⁹ Courtney posits a *lacuna* after *Silv.* 1.6.96; *tua* therefore lacks a referent.

tion to himself and to his own state of mind. His failure to continue the poem is a gesture that acknowledges ultimately the inexpressibility of the emperor's power. At the end of *Silvae* 1.6, the poet refers to his insufficiency to write a poem of imperial praise: *deficio* ('I falter', 96). The solution here is not to summon an imperial Muse but to end the poem.

As John Henderson suggests of the beginning and the ending of the *Thebaid*, the 'humility' of a poem's apologies constitutes 'a rhetoric of deflection and meiosis, the characteristic décor of urbane discourse under the empire'.⁵⁰ This claim of insufficiency at the end of *Silvae* 1.6 can be seen, then, also as a quiet, urbane rhetorical gesture that allows the poet, under the guise of alcohol-induced drowsiness, to elude the emperor's total control over the *Saturnalia*. The poet's departure from the proceedings forms a silent acknowledgement of the poet's own *libertas* on the emperor's day, his freedom both to leave and to end the poem as he himself wishes. Thus, even as he acknowledges his failure to describe fully the wonders and delights of the emperor's feast, he asserts his right to carve out his own poetic space.

Conclusion

Peter Stallybrass and Allon White have argued that carnival is 'ideologically powerful in the study of ideological repertoires and cultural practices'.⁵¹ In the swift-moving hendecasyllables of *Silvae* 1.6, a metre associated with social and political irreverence, Statius explores from within the public arena the hegemonic practices that confirmed the social and political order under Domitian. Statius' account of the shows reveals the magnificent occasion they provided for the demonstration of imperial greatness and the furthering of the idea of the emperor's divinely sanctioned rule. Indeed, the particular occasion of the *Saturnalia* draws attention to the association between Domitian and Jupiter, a god who supplanted his father Saturn. This association authorises Domitian, Jupiter's earthly counterpart, to control Saturn and his feast. In the amphitheatre the emperor reproduces a golden age of pleasure and bounty, where nature is supremely

⁵⁰ Henderson (1993) 164.

⁵¹ Stallybrass and White (1986) 26.

compliant with human needs. But the poem also reveals the paradoxes on which imperial fictions can be based.

First of all, at the same time as it celebrates imperial majesty and theatrical display, the poem plays upon the paradoxical nature of Roman *libertas* under Domitian. The somatic and material pleasures specific to carnival—the hectic bombardment of novelties, the abundance of food and drink, the feasting of the eyes—here bind the Roman people closely in approbation and complicity to their emperor. Far from challenging the emperor, the people enthusiastically endorse him, confirming his fashioning as a god. The concept of *libertas* thus appears as weakened and no longer functions as a powerful political ideal; indeed, the word appears in *Silvae* 1.6 only to express the relaxed social relations among the different ranks at the feast (45). And even this social differentiation is spatially and temporally contained—by the elliptical walls of the amphitheatre, and by the imperial appropriation of the calendar. The celebration of the shows in *Silvae* 1.6 is underpinned by a redefinition of *libertas* as a concept that is controlled by Domitian, who decides on what day the people can be ‘free’ and happy and what form that freedom should take. A cultural practice based upon freedom has been resignified as willing compliance with the persuasive fictions of power.

Secondly, the shows in the amphitheatre are seen to reinforce both community and hierarchy. As spectators, the people are complicitous with the emperor in their subordination of other races—non-citizens—and of people who are freaks of nature. The display of the ‘other’ as entertainment is an effective practice for creating community among the Roman citizens; when exotic performers act below for their entertainment, and exotic birds fly from above into their laps, their superiority is normalised and constructed as part of a natural order of being. At the same time, as consumers the people are themselves put in a position subordinate to that of the emperor. Their acclamations are no match for the extravagance and amazing ingenuity of his gifts. The emperor’s entertainments are on a colossal scale that suggests his divinity and hence his distance from his subjects. Senators and equestrians are not distinguished from the *plebs* in their response to the emperor. Under the emperor, the old categories of social advancement have been diffused in exchange for more fluid means of preferment.⁵² The games legitimate the hierar-

⁵² See Jones (1992) 22–6.

chical structuring of Roman society at the same time as they suggest the existence of a new social and political order.

Thirdly, while the shows seem designed to assert the stability of the regime, they offer the people the spectacle of rapid change. The amphitheatre is a restless place that creates anxiety mixed with pleasure. Here, where sights and sounds constantly change, the Ovidian world of change and flux is represented in microcosm:

hos inter fremitus nouosque luxus
spectandi levis effugit uoluptas

(Statius, *Silvae* 1.6.51–2)

Amidst the roar and the novel luxuries the insubstantial pleasure of viewing flees.

The amphitheatre offers fleeting impressions and lots of noise: *fremitus* ('roar', *Silv.* 1.6.51); *tumultus* ('tumult', 66); *plaudunt* ('the crowd applauds', 70); *tinnulaeque* ('tinkling', 71); *confremunt* ('the crowd roars in unison', 72); *tollunt innumeras . . . uoces* ('they raise innumerable voices', 81); *sonantes* ('trumpeting', 82); *clamant* ('the crowd shouts', 83). The final dramatic expression of the emperor's metamorphic power is the wonderful gleaming globe of light that rivals that stellar symbol of metamorphosis, Ariadne's Crown. The metamorphic world of the amphitheatre with its fleeting pleasures and sounds produces a disjunction between the fluidity of pleasure and the purported stability of imperial rule that Golden Age bounty asserts.

The principle of change embodied in the shows is related to the concept of imperial power that is expressed in this poem. As Jupiter, Domitian is capable of change from beneficent to punitive ruler. Domitian's majestic presence at the games rests upon a powerful union of extraordinary control and the unpredictable exercise of authority. The prospect of rapid change, along with the duality of the emperor himself, provides a paradigm of the workings of imperial power consistent with its representation elsewhere in the *Silvae*: those who serve the emperor, whether by managing his city or treasury or by applauding his games, earn great rewards but remain subject to the unpredictability of a power that constitutes itself as divine and thus outside human or natural law.

Part of the project of the *Silvae* is the critical examination of shifts in cultural attitudes and ideas, and the accompanying search for a new discourse that can authorise and analyse them. As Richard Wilson observes, carnival functioned in the Renaissance as 'a symbolic

system over which continuous struggle to wrest its meaning was waged by competing ideologies'.⁵³ In *Silvae* 1.6 the amphitheatre on the emperor's *Saturnalia* provides the imperial poet with a new and challenging forum in which to confront and negotiate with the dazzling spectacle of imperial power. The emperor's encompassing power inevitably poses a problem for the poet of imperial praise who struggles to portray the emperor's majesty without eclipse of his own literary worth. Although *Silvae* 1.6 demonstrates the triumph of imperial ideology over the ideology of popular *libertas*, Statius' representation of imperial spectacle reminds us that he is the master-poet of imperial epic—and also now in the *Silvae* of a new, refined aesthetic that resists absorption by the crowd. Thus he dramatically enacts his own *libertas* by his final disengagement from the feast. Indeed, whereas the emperor could offer only fleeting delights in his amphitheatre, Statius' poem provides more substantial, enduring pleasures.

⁵³ Wilson (1987) 42.

19. AFTER THE SILENCE: TACITUS, SUETONIUS, JUVENAL

Marcus Wilson

The traditional picture of the Flavian emperors, and especially the last of them, depended almost exclusively on the evidence provided by near contemporary literary sources, especially those written in Latin and familiar to most classical scholars. Of these sources, Tacitus, Suetonius and Juvenal were pre-eminent. In support of their credibility was the remarkable consistency apparent in their joint portrayal of the oppressive nature of Domitian's principate in its last phase. Their powerful and mutually supportive testimony was accepted as authoritative, even though the publication of all three authors' works occurred subsequent to the fall of the Flavian dynasty.¹ Though their texts date to the time of Trajan or even later, the authors had nevertheless lived under Domitian and had experienced that period of tyranny at first hand. Furthermore, Tacitus in his *Agricola* had provided a convincing explanation why such works could not have been published earlier (*Agr.* 2): freedom of expression especially on any matter with political implications had been effectively abolished under Domitian, a time of book burnings, prosecutions of authors, banishment of philosophers and other intellectuals, and open encouragement of *delatores* ('informers') to inform on and prosecute dissidents. *Adempto per inquisitiones etiam loquendi audiendique commercio* ('Even the normal interchange of speaking and listening was curtailed by

¹ Domitian has been traditionally pictured as '[i]mperious, suspicious, and with a curious streak of cruelty mingled with superstition. . . . Domitian has never earned any man's love and has found few indeed to praise him': Henderson (1927) 11. His evil reputation was preserved and exaggerated by Christian writers, and Gibbon's view, based on a thorough knowledge of the ancient sources is encapsulated in his statement that: 'Under the mild administration of Titus, the Roman world enjoyed a transient felicity, and his beloved memory served to protect, above fifteen years, the vices of his brother Domitian'. Waters (1964) 49 states that: 'His character however is still allowed to be painted in terms of the malevolent attacks of hostile witnesses'; see also Southern (1997) viii: 'Domitian has been portrayed by some authors as a monstrous tyrant, an inflexible pedant with no imagination, an incompetent general'.

spying’); *memoriam quoque ipsam cum uoce perdidissemus, si tam in nostra potestate esset obliuisci quam tacere* (‘We would have lost memory itself along with our ability to speak out, if it were as easy for us to forget as to keep silent’). Though it was recognised that Tacitus might have had additional motives in writing this passage, such as defending himself from imputations of pusillanimity in his own dealings with Domitian or manipulating the new emperor Trajan into creating a more tolerant and supportive cultural environment for the future, his evocation of ‘a reign of terror’ under the previous regime carried conviction in the eyes of most modern commentators.

Until recently, that is. Revisionist historical interpretation of the careers and personalities of Roman emperors stands out as one of the typical activities of modern research in the field of ancient history. It invariably involves a radical scepticism about the characterisation of the emperor conveyed by the literary sources, on the grounds that those sources are certain to be biased, being a product of the educated classes resentful of the limitation of the senate’s privileges by the new constitutional arrangement that Augustus had instituted. Roman historiography, by a tradition going back to the Elder Cato, was a genre practised by members of the senatorial class and its whole tradition reflects a senatorial point of view. In a reversal of the usual maxim, that history is always written by the victor, the underlying principle of the modern rejection of the literary portrayal of these emperors seems to be that Roman imperial history was always written by the losers, and is therefore highly suspect. Since the impetus of the work of Waters in the 1960s, modern historians have gradually rehabilitated Domitian’s reputation to the point where a new orthodoxy has emerged best represented by the two biographies published in the 1990s by Jones and Southern.² Both scholars pride themselves on their independence from the ‘bias of the literary sources’³ and especially from the Tacitean portrait of the emperor that succeeded ‘only in obscuring him’.⁴ Jones is concerned

² Jones (1992); Southern (1997). Other significant contributors to the rejection of the ancient literary picture of Domitian include Waters (1964) 49–77; Waters (1969) 385–404; Waters (1975) 381–430; Urban (1971).

³ E.g., Jones (1992) 196: ‘Assessing Domitian’s character and that of his reign is bedevilled by two separate factors, the bias of the literary sources and the judgemental standards adopted by the aristocracy. . . . These factors have been responsible for much, but not all, of the hostility directed at Domitian’.

⁴ Southern (1997) 1.

to stress Domitian's administrative achievements and, though he admits evidence that while *princeps* he had executed at least eleven prominent senators and sent many others into exile,⁵ he plays down the significance of this by treating it as a kind of managerial slip-up⁶ and seeks to mitigate Domitian's crimes by comparison with those of Claudius whose victims were numerically greater. Domitian's attitude to the senatorial class is recharacterised as 'that of a benevolent despot'.⁷ The same comparison with Claudius is made by Southern who speculates in addition that the ancient sources might have suppressed the existence of genuine plots in which some of Domitian's victims could have been implicated. Suetonius is argued to have sensationalised Domitian's cruelty by cataloguing his victims together rather than treating them separately and chronologically.⁸ As the title of Southern's book (*Domitian: Tragic Tyrant*) indicates, the approach taken to the emperor is markedly sympathetic—he is a 'tragic' figure, due compassion rather than condemnation—and psychoanalytic: he is recast as himself a *victim* of serious mental illness, in the form of paranoia,⁹ a condition undiagnosable in antiquity, especially where, as in Domitian's case, the deterioration was progressive rather than sudden.

No reader of both the ancient writers and the modern historians on Domitian can fail to be struck by the incompatibility between the two portrayals. Students are faced with a stark choice between one or the other, the ancient or the modern. An even greater problem is posed for literary scholarship when the political themes of works like Tacitus' *Agricola* or Juvenal's fourth Satire have the ground pulled out from under their feet by modern historians who deny the reality of the 'reign of terror' they take pains to describe. The historicist bent of current literary criticism is ill-adapted to challenge

⁵ Jones (1992) 180.

⁶ Jones (1992) 188: 'He erred, perhaps, in being consistent, in dealing as "carefully and conscientiously" with senatorial malefactors as he did with those of lower status'.

⁷ Jones (1992) 192.

⁸ Southern (1997) 116: 'The impact would have been reduced had the names been distributed throughout a chronological account; 13 senatorial executions in 15 years would not have made such a gripping headline'. The implication here that Suetonius deliberately arranged his account to exaggerate Domitian's guilt is not so persuasive when one considers that this sort of topical (rather than chronological) arrangement is standard practice in all his biographies.

⁹ Southern (1997) 119–25 (ch. 12: 'The Psychology of Suspicion').

the revisionist historical interpretation of Flavian Rome or any other period because it takes current historical wisdom as its starting point. Because the credibility of what the literary sources say about Domitian has been impugned, the significance of these works suffers a devaluation. Tacitus cannot so easily be admired as a great dissector of despotism,¹⁰ if the despotism he dissects is believed to have been largely the invention of himself and his senatorial compeers. He becomes the mouthpiece of narrow class interest or, even less forgivable, of Trajanic propaganda.¹¹ A comprehensive case for the second of these possibilities was put forward by Ramage in 1989,¹² and it is instructive to reconsider his main arguments and why they fail to convince.

For Ramage, the definitive context is the date of publication, which in all instances can be placed after Domitian's death; and Pliny's *Panegyricus* is held up as the key that unlocks the true meaning of the other literary works of the age. This speech, designed to celebrate the accession of Trajan, agrees in its detailed enumeration of Domitian's vices with the testimony of Tacitus, Juvenal and Suetonius. Pliny employs denigration of the earlier emperor as a rhetorical device to point a contrast with the new emperor: Trajan's virtues are presented as the reversal of Domitian's vices. This leads Ramage to expound a new (and obviously reductive) interpretive principle to the effect that criticism of an earlier emperor by a Roman author is no more than an expression of support for the new emperor: 'the function of this kind of denigration was primarily eulogistic'.¹³ Denigration of predecessors as an adulatory technique is seen as extending beyond criticism of the immediate predecessor to all the earlier *principes*, though for the Trajanic period the negative *exemplum* of Domitian is made to occupy centre-stage. That Tacitus exploits a

¹⁰ A view of Tacitus well represented by Boesche (1987) 189–210.

¹¹ An idea that seems to carry the authority of Syme (1958) 125, though he does no more than state the idea and refer to *Agr.* 3, as if that were proof of the proposition.

¹² Ramage (1989) 640–707.

¹³ Ramage (1989) 641. It is a weakness of the revisionist defence of Domitian that it also requires an accompanying revisionist downgrading of Trajan's reputation. Ramage (1989) 706, following Waters (1969) 385–404, calls Trajan's Principate 'perhaps the most totalitarian regime to date'. For a more recent and balanced account of Trajan, see Bennett (1997).

similar antithesis between Trajan and Domitian, is well known. In the third paragraph of the *Agricola* he uses a medical analogy to illustrate the recovery of Rome under Nerva and Trajan from the debilitating effects caused by Domitian's *saeuitia* ('cruelty'): *Nunc demum redit animus* ('Now at last we are returning to consciousness'); *augeatque cotidie felicitatem temporum Nerua Traianus* ('Trajan day by day is augmenting the happiness of the times'); but *tardiora sunt remedia quam mala* ('the remedies operate more slowly than the disease itself'); *promptissimus quisque saeuitia principis intercederunt* ('the most resolute of us perished as a result of Domitian's cruelty'); *pauci et, ut dixerim, non modo aliorum sed etiam nostri superstites sumus* ('we few have survived not just the others but even, in a sense, ourselves'). Again near the end of the *Agricola* the two emperors are juxtaposed:

nam sicut ei non licuit durare in hanc beatissimi saeculi kucem ac principem Traianum uidere, quod augurio uotisque apud nostras aures ominabatur, ita festinatae mortis graue solacium tulit euasisse postremum illud tempus, quo Domitianus non iam per interualla ac spiramenta temporum sed continuo et uelut uno ictu rem publicam exhaustit.

(Tacitus, *Agricola* 44.5)

Though *Agricola* was not lucky enough to remain alive into the dawn of this blessed era and to see Trajan made emperor, an event he foretold in my own hearing in both prophecy and prayer, still he obtained a compensation for his early death in evading Domitian's last years when no longer intermittently and with occasional rest periods but in a single, unbroken convulsion he drained his country's blood.

Ramage's theory has implications for Tacitean studies that go far beyond interpretation of the *Agricola*. All of Tacitus' criticism of Emperors in all his works, including the *Historiae* and *Annales*, becomes a form of inverted flattery of the new imperial house, a vindication of Trajanic policy through contrast with the failed policies of the past. Tacitus, the great castigator of senatorial *adulatio* is transformed, according to this line of interpretation, into the greatest imperial flatterer of all time.

Similarly, Suetonius' emphasis on the moral and governmental shortcomings of the Julio-Claudian and Flavian emperors served, according to this argument, to promote public confidence in the superiority of their second-century successors. Ramage quotes Waters' opinion to this effect: 'Suetonius accepted and helped to crystallise the convention of disparaging the previous dynasty, studiously fostered

by the “Good Emperors”, Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian’.¹⁴ In the last sentence of the *Domitianus* (and the *Caesares* as a collection), the contrast between the present and the preceding regime is finally made explicit:

Ipsum etiam Domitianum ferunt somniasse gibbam sibi pone ceruicem auream enatam, pro certoque habuisse beatiorem post se laetio remque portendi rei publicae statum, sicut sane breui euenit abstinencia et moderatione insequentium principum.

(Suetonius, *Domitianus* 23.2)

It is said Domitian had a dream that a golden hump grew on the back of his neck, which he took as a prophetic sign that more prosperous and happy times in Rome would follow after him; and this soon came to pass through the self-restraint and moderation of his successors on the imperial throne.

Juvenal in his fourth Satire echoes the same list of charges against Domitian found in Pliny, Tacitus and Suetonius. He acted tyrannically (*tyranni*, 86), encouraged informers (*delatore*, 48) and gross flattery of himself (67–9, 116–29), lacked genuine military glory (implied in 144–9), claimed divine honours he had not earned (71), resembled Nero in his *luxuria* and enslavement of Rome (38, 137), and had as his most prominent trait *saevitia*, as a consequence of which he stripped the city of its most distinguished citizens (150–2). The poem re-enacts the absence of *libertas* by a mock-epic depiction of the interaction of the Emperor with his closest advisors, none of whom is bold enough to express an independent thought. Ramage concludes that, ‘Trajan must have been very happy with *Satire* 4, for it contributed in an important way to his anti-Domitianic propaganda and so ultimately, though indirectly, to the enhancement of his own position and activities by the contrast that was implied’.¹⁵ Other features of Juvenal’s work are adduced to support this idea. Passages in other satires are said to reflect the corrupt atmosphere of Domitian’s reign (e.g., *Sat.* 2.29–81; 6.82–113; 7.80–92). The satirist’s sudden bursting into speech at the start of *Satire* 1 is itself read as ‘a demonstration of the new *libertas* which followed the tyranny of Domitian’,¹⁶ and

¹⁴ Ramage (1989) 659 n. 40, quoting Waters (1970) 62 n. 1. Ramage adds: ‘He is thinking primarily of Domitian, but what he says applies to the biographer’s treatment of the other emperors as well’.

¹⁵ Ramage (1989) 706.

¹⁶ Ramage (1989) 665–6.

his assertion that he will take his satirical examples from the dead whose ashes rest alongside the Flaminian and Latin Ways (1.170–1) is cited as evidence that he has denigration of Domitian and other past emperors in mind.¹⁷ Trajan's times are exempted from the satirist's vituperation.

On Domitian's death the senate condemned him to *damnatio memoriae*. In the view of Ramage and those who follow a similar line of interpretation, Tacitus, Juvenal and Suetonius are implementing this official policy through literary means, doing in words what the wielder of the obliterating chisel was required to do in erasing Domitian's face from his statues and his name from inscriptions. They are therefore complicit in the systematic falsification of the historical record. Satire, in particular, is a genre suited to the destruction of reputations, and therefore a valuable political ally of a new repressive regime. 'Denigration of predecessor was a potent factor in the *damnatio memoriae* that Domitian's successors organised against him. . . . [I]t is possible to see Juvenal working most clearly for the establishment as he contributes to the *damnatio memoriae* of the last Flavian'.¹⁸ Literary scholarship too has in general been willing to accept with only mild qualification the 'propagandist' function assigned to Trajanic literature by recent historians.¹⁹

The principal weakness of this way of reading the literature is that it completely ignores the issue of genre, by reducing all literary forms to one, that is, panegyric. Ramage takes Pliny's *Panegyricus* as the paradigm for all the writing of the time and transposes the effects of the contrast of Trajan and Domitian he finds there to the other genres of satire, history and biography. It is indeed the function of

¹⁷ Ramage (1989) 667. As Ramage (1989) 668 n. 60 points out, the Mausoleum of Augustus was close to the *Via Flaminia*, and Suetonius (*Dom.* 17.3) says Domitian was supposed to have been cremated by his nurse Phyllis at a property on the *Via Latina*.

¹⁸ Ramage (1989) 706.

¹⁹ See, for instance, Braund (1993) 67–8, with reference to *Satire* 4: 'Roman satire on political subjects affirms rather than challenges the status quo and buttresses the present regime, which is often if not usually defined by reference to previous regimes. . . . In this way, satire is an indirect manifestation of the political programme of its day . . . So, in conclusion, the satire which at first sight may appear to be so revolutionary and anarchic and which likes to lay claim to a certain freedom of speech can itself, in its denigration of earlier emperors, be viewed as a disguised form of flattery and affirmation of the present regime. . . . [I]n imperial Rome, the satiric impulse is harnessed to the requirements of the regime which wields power.'

panegyric to praise the emperor and his policies. That is not the function of history, as Tacitus professes it, which is rather to recreate the experience of the past and pass judgement on events and influential individuals (*Ann.* 3.65).²⁰ Nor is it the function of satire, which is to castigate vice in a powerful and entertaining way; nor of Suetonian biography, the function of which is to record a person's life in terms of its achievements, idiosyncrasies and moral strengths or defects.²¹ Only by means of massive oversimplification and by ignoring the authors' own definitions of their aims can these other genres be treated as if they are really organs of semi-official government communication. The 'propaganda' theory is especially strained when applied to Juvenal. Only one of his sixteen satires is political in character. Trajan is barely mentioned in any of them, let alone praised. The denigration of Domitian in *Satire* 4 is not accompanied by any positive allusion to his successors, as one would expect if the analogy with Pliny's *Panegyricus* is to be sustained. Juvenal, despite his self-exonerating assertion at the end of *Satire* 1 that he will draw his examples of vice from the dead, conveys the unmistakable impression that he regards the streets of Rome as incorrigibly vice-ridden at the time of publication. In fact, more so than in the past. The reader is expected to nod in agreement when asked: *et quando uberior uitiorum copia?* ('When in the past did we have a more fertile harvest of vices?', 87). If the satires are meant to convey a rosy picture of post-Domitianic Rome, they have been singularly unsuccessful. *Satire* 4 cannot be isolated from the other early satires and the tone of voice in which they are cast. Would an emperor find it useful to have his policies promoted through a mouthpiece like the speaker of *Satire* 1 or *Satire* 6? The *persona* Juvenal presents is of a man who barely has his temper under control, who is irrationally angry, ruled by *indignatio*, xenophobic, misogynist, verbally aggressive, alienated and discontented, and who feels dispossessed of his birthright as a Roman. This extremism is a recipe for a public relations disaster. Juvenal's *persona* is designed to provoke strong reactions and in pursuit of that aim the poet is always ready to be offensive to at least

²⁰ For discussions of Tacitus' conception of history, see Mellor (1993); Mellor (1999) 88–109.

²¹ On the function of satire see Braund (1992); on that of biography Wallace-Hadrill (1983); Lewis (1991) 3623–74; Bradley (1991) 3713–15.

some potential readers. This outrageous *persona* is the living contradiction of some of the very virtues Trajan sought to associate with his principate, such as, most conspicuously, *moderatio*.²² To read Juvenal's *Satires* as Trajanic propaganda is like mistaking a stand-up comedian for the President's press secretary.

Similar objections stand in the way of reading the works of Suetonius and Tacitus as organs of imperial ideology. In the case of Suetonius, the reigning Emperor was Hadrian and the contrast with Domitian after this considerable lapse of time will have lost much of its point. Positive allusion to Trajan and Hadrian is conspicuously missing until the last nine words of the text. Nor is it the case that the accounts of earlier emperors are uniformly condemnatory. In all cases a careful balance sheet of virtues and vices is set out for the reader's instruction, with better emperors occasionally censured and worse ones given occasional praise. The biography of Domitian ought not to be viewed in isolation, for all three of the Flavian *Caesares* form the subject of a single book that has its own internal coherence, as is set out in the first paragraph of the *Vespasianus*, which foreshadows the final paragraphs of the *Domitianus*. Other details reinforce this unity of the Flavian *Caesares*, for instance the two omens provided by the same cypress tree that, by renewed growth, predicted Vespasian's accession (*Vesp.* 5.4) and, by later toppling over, predicted Domitian's imminent overthrow (*Dom.* 15.2). Book 8 of Suetonius is, as a whole, by no means all disparaging of the Flavians. In fact, in his introduction to it, he offers a contrast not with later emperors but with the previous ones,²³ and gives credit to the *gens Flavia* for 'taking charge of and strengthening an unstable empire' (*uagum imperium suscepit firmauitque*, *Vesp.* 1). Despite their lack of noble ancestors, the Flavians were a family that served their country well (*obscura illa quidem ac sine ullis maiorum imaginibus, sed tamen rei publicae nequaquam paenitenda*, 'that family while obscure and lacking ancestral portraits was nevertheless not one our country should view with shame', *Vesp.* 1). Even Ramage admits that 'Vespasian and Titus are . . . for the most part treated with respect by Suetonius and at times even

²² Suet. *Dom.* 22.2 quoted above; Plin. *Pan.* 54.5, 55.5; Ramage (1989) 644, 650; Fears (1981b) 914, 916, 917, 921.

²³ Suetonius at *Vesp.* 1 links book 8 to the previous Emperors by a backward-looking contrast in the same way that the last sentence *Dom.* 23 provides a forward-looking contrast with Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian.

with admiration.²⁴ Titus, in particular, is introduced as the 'idol and darling of the human race' (*amor ac deliciae generis humanae*, *Tit.* 1), and when he dies the loss is a loss to humanity rather than to himself (*maiore hominum damno quam suo*, *Tit.* 10). If Domitian's faults have been exaggerated by Suetonius, there is an explanation at hand both in the internal dynamic of book 8, which seeks to contrast the performance of the two brothers in the exercise of imperial power (see esp. *Tit.* 9.3; *Dom.* 2.3), and in the perceived parallelism between the Flavian and Julio-Claudian families,²⁵ which matches Domitian with Nero as the agents of dynastic extinction. There is no need to posit Trajanic or Hadrianic propaganda to account for the blacker tones of the portrait of Domitian.

While it is true that Tacitus twice refers in commendatory terms to Trajan in the *Agricola* (3.1; 44.5) and that a contrast is certainly drawn between the policies of Domitian and those of his successors, it is not reasonable to infer that this is the main motivation for the work. It is with the superior excellence of *Agricola* rather than Trajan to which Domitian's failings are most pointedly opposed, especially in the long and climactic section of text that covers the period between the victory at Mons Graupius and *Agricola's* death (39.1–45.2). The Emperor is jealous of *Agricola's* military competence (39.1–3); receives him on his return to Rome with grudging respect (40.3); listens to secret accusations against him (41.1); hypocritically grants a request from *Agricola* to be excused from taking on the governorship of another province after giving heavy-handed hints that he wished not to appoint him (42.1–2); is rumoured to have murdered him by poison (43.2); feigns grief at his death (43.3); and subsequently embarks upon a campaign of terror against the Romans worse than Nero's (44.5–45.2). Domitian is not denigrated as the predecessor of Trajan but as the persecutor of Tacitus' father-in-law. The work ends not with a public thanksgiving for the arrival of Trajan but with a very personal address to the deceased in the manner of a funeral speech (45.3–46.4). Tacitus speaks as a representative here of *Agricola's* family, not of the senate; and the reader is left contemplating the legacy of *Agricola's* example, not the new Em-

²⁴ Ramage (1989) 662.

²⁵ See *Vesp.* 25 on that emperor's dream that he saw scales in which Claudius and Nero were balanced against himself and his sons.

peror's reforms. There is a personal and familial dimension to the *Agricola* and, at the end, a consolatory tone, that set this work apart from a more purely public and political document like Pliny's *Panegyricus*. Those who seek the rationale for a work of literature in the political conditions of the time of writing seize on the eulogy of Trajan in the first half of paragraph 3 of the *Agricola* as the key to the meaning of the whole. It is, though, a simplistic reading that finds an easy answer in a single sentence. That Tacitus' confidence in Trajan's commitment to *libertas* is somewhat tentative is indicated by his lament that he felt he had been obliged to ask for permission to write the biography at all (*at nunc narraturo mihi uitam defuncti hominis uenia opus fuit*, 1.4).²⁶ In complimenting Nerva and Trajan for their restoration of *libertas*, he puts pressure on the new Emperor to live up to the high standards of tolerance for which he is being acclaimed. Paragraph 3 makes most sense as an attempt to exercise power over the holder of supreme power by praising him for the restraint he will display before he has a chance not to display it. Power is not a one-sided game.

For whose sake did Tacitus write the *Agricola* and his other works? Syme and his many historicist disciples would reply that, the *Agricola* is 'a manifesto for the Emperor Trajan and the new imperial aristocracy'.²⁷ A more subtle historicism argues that Tacitus' works raise questions about Trajan's performance in the minds of the educated Roman elite by highlighting past events that seem to exhibit some resemblance to current ones.²⁸ Tacitus is, however, quite clear in the *Agricola* about his targeted audience, and it is neither the Emperor nor his own senatorial colleagues. His aim, stated in his first sentence (with a loaded echo of Cato's *Origines*) is 'to record the achievements and moral qualities of distinguished men for posterity' (*clarorum uirorum facta moresque posteris tradere*). This implied rejection of his contemporaries as the primary audience for which he is writing is reiterated in the last sentence of the work, which carefully repeats the

²⁶ As Liebeschuetz (1966) 133 wrote: 'The age which is hostile to virtue and is unfavourably contrasted with and earlier, better age therefore of necessity includes the time when Nerva and Trajan are reigning and Tacitus is writing'.

²⁷ Syme (1958) 125.

²⁸ See, for instance, Rutledge (1998) 141–59 on correspondences between episodes of *Annals* 1–2 and Trajan's situation. Bennett (1997) 133 writes cautiously: '... some have seen in the *Annals* a projection of Tacitus' personal disenchantment with the barely concealed absolutism of Trajan's rule'.

reference to future generations as his anticipated readers (*Agricola posteritate narratus*, 'Agricola's story is told for posterity', *Agr.* 46.4). Years later, in the *Annals* (3.65), 'posterity' (*posteritate*) is again stipulated as the readership Tacitus has in mind (cf. *cura posteritatis*, *Hist.* 1.1.). The historicist approach requires us to disregard the historian's explicit statements, reiterated at widely separated stages of his career as a writer, that he aims to overstep the expectations of his contemporaries and to speak directly to their descendants. We may disbelieve him; we may think his proposal impossible. That, though, may say less about Tacitus' limitations than about our own.

'Opposition among Roman nobles had a literary tinge under the Julio-Claudii, a philosophic tinge under the Flavians.'²⁹ MacMullen, writing in the 1960s, regarded the connection between philosophers and conflict with the Emperor in the late first century as a fact beyond dispute.³⁰ Another view, advanced most forcefully in the first instance by Wirszubski, which has over the last forty years won more adherents, is that Stoics like Thrasea Paetus and Helvidius Priscus were primarily motivated by their sense of senatorial duty and that their Stoic views were therefore largely incidental.³¹ Consequently one of the key planks in the ancient literary account of political tensions in the Flavian period has come to be seen as largely irrelevant, to the extent that it is now treated as almost out of date to attempt to defend the connection between Stoicism and political resistance in Roman history: 'There are (still) those who would see in the philosophy a peculiar basis for political opposition. Although this ghost has finally been laid to rest in its more substantial apparitions (principally by the work of Wirszubski) it continues to reappear in ever more clever guises'.³² Recent suppression of the Falun Gong movement in China offers a timely reminder that authoritarian states often view apparently apolitical groups, even where concerned principally

²⁹ MacMullen (1966) 46.

³⁰ MacMullen (1966) 53: '... why philosophy and subversion went together (as they undeniably did) ...'.

³¹ Wirszubski (1950) 138 on Thrasea: '... he acted primarily as a courageous and upright Roman senator who held Stoic views, not as a Stoic philosopher who happened to be a senator at Rome'. Followers of this line of interpretation include Brunt (1975) 23; Griffin (1984) 171-7; Jones (1992) 124; and Shaw (1985) 48: 'Thraseda acted first as a Roman senator and only secondarily happened to hold Stoic views'.

³² Shaw (1985) 45.

with the cultivation of the self, as a political threat and thereby force them into a dissident role. While it is true that the Stoic opposition to the emperors in the second half of the first century arose from members of the senatorial class, this does not remove the significance of Stoicism to their actions. There were far more senators who did *not* express any opposition; and, of those who did, the proportion who had links to Stoicism is nothing short of remarkable.

Two influential studies, those of Brunt and Shaw,³³ further reduced the place of Stoicism in the politics of opposition. Brunt's case was that Stoicism 'did not condemn monarchy in theory' and in fact never 'condemned any political system as such'.³⁴ Rather, the Stoic view was that human beings should 'occupy the station to which they had been called by birth and ability',³⁵ a doctrine that applied equally to emperors and senators. The result was that right conduct for the Stoics was determined by the accepted standards and practices of their own class and time, and the only difference between them and other citizens was their determination to fulfil their allotted roles 'with unusual resolution, zeal and fortitude'.³⁶ The end result of this approach is to collapse any distinction between Stoic and Roman.³⁷ Yet there clearly was sufficient distinction in Vespasian's and Domitian's minds when they banned philosophers from Rome; as there was in the minds of prosecutors of the Stoics (like Cossutianus Capito and Eprius Marcellus) in depicting their adversaries as driven by Stoicism into treasonous behaviour; as there was in the minds of Seneca and Epictetus who continually portray Roman values as being in need of radical reformation along Stoic lines; and as there was in Tacitus' mind in contrasting the Stoics' more provocative conduct with that of Agricola (Suet. *Dom.* 10.3; Tac. *Ann.* 16.22, 28; *Hist.* 4.8.; *Agr.* 42.4; see also Dio 65.13; 67.13). The final step was taken by Shaw who redefined Stoicism as the ideology of the Roman ruling elite, that is, as the conceptual framework that validated the political, social and economic hierarchies that prevailed in Rome.

³³ Brunt (1975) 7–35; Shaw (1985) 16–54.

³⁴ Brunt (1975) 17–18.

³⁵ Brunt (1975) 21.

³⁶ Brunt (1975) 32.

³⁷ As illustrated, for instance, by the comment of Brunt (1975) 23: 'The same critic rightly observes that Marcus' policy and legislation were largely traditional, and concludes that he was basically a Roman rather than a Stoic. But the antithesis is false'.

According to this way of thinking, the philosophy of Stoicism went far beyond advocating conformity to Roman traditions in that it supplied the intellectual environment that underpinned the imperial system of government itself. It was, therefore, not just complicit in the political processes that some Stoics thought they were criticising, but was the system of ideas that made possible the inequalities of power and wealth in Roman society and the autocratic administrative order that maintained them. Brunt's identification of the Stoic with the Roman was recast by Shaw into an identification of the Stoic with the imperialist.

The greatest weakness of these approaches is that they fail to engage with or even to take seriously the fundamental tenet of Roman Stoicism. To borrow the succinct formulation of Tacitus, the Stoics believed that 'only those things that are morally upright may be included in the category "good" and only those things that are morally debased may be included in the category "bad" and they consider power, aristocratic birth and everything else that is beyond the control of the mind to belong to neither the "good" nor the "bad"' (*qui sola bona quae honesta, mala tantum quae turpia, potentiam nobilitatem ceteraque extra animum neque bonis neque malis adnumerant*, *Hist.* 4.5). This distinction between those things that are morally significant and those that are 'indifferent' (to use the normal term), such as wealth, social status or political influence, is the first principle of Stoicism, reiterated on page after page by Epictetus and Seneca. Brunt and Shaw recontextualise Stoicism in ways that skirt this essential doctrine. As a preliminary to his account of the interrelation of Stoicism and the Principate Brunt provides what he calls 'a rather impressionistic sketch' of Stoic ethics.³⁸ The effect of this sketch is to reverse the emphases set out above so that the indifferents—the term he prefers is 'things of value'—like wealth and power become the leading determinants of action. He elides the primary distinction between what is morally significant and what is indifferent and promotes secondary doctrines about the natural human preference for some indifferents over others into a first principle of Stoic ethics. Shaw takes as his starting point the sociology of Stoicism, claiming that from Zeno onwards 'Stoicism was propagated by "outsiders"'.³⁹ He

³⁸ Brunt (1975) 10.

³⁹ Shaw (1985) 21.

never considers the obvious objection to treating Stoicism as an ideology, that the philosophy is uncompromisingly counter-ideological. The theory of ideology posits a set of ruling ideas in a society that defends and validates inequalities of wealth and power. It is an unquestioned assumption of all ideological theory that the preservation or acquisition of wealth and power and other such privileges are the mainsprings of human action. Yet it is the first teaching of Stoicism that these things are not so important as they are conventionally supposed to be, but are to be regarded as 'indifferent'. While the confirmed ideologist may argue in response that the Stoics were all hypocrites or self-deceived, it remains the case that the philosophy encouraged its followers to think outside the ideological enclosure into which they were born and to apply a criterion of action to their daily lives that relegated personal or class interest to, at most, a secondary consideration. When in discussing a system of thought we bypass the ideas for the 'historical activity of the ideas'⁴⁰ we avoid, consciously or unconsciously, having our own ways of thinking challenged.

Much of the argument against the significance of the Stoic opposition has been focused on the absence of any surviving condemnation of types of government in Stoic theory. Stoicism was not so monolithic a body of thought as it is often assumed to have been, and its Roman form differed from the Greek both in its more applied, and even anti-theoretical, character and as a result of the perceived significance of Stoic moral values in Roman political history. This latter stems from the younger Cato's opposition to Julius Caesar in the civil war of 49–45 BCE; his choice to commit suicide rather than live under Caesar's rule; and the use of rival eulogistic or condemnatory biographies of him in political debate in the years that followed (such as the *Cato* of Brutus and Caesar's own *Anti-Cato*). Cato's profile as an anti-Caesarian Stoic was maintained by literary means through the first century CE, for instance in Lucan's *De Bello Civili*, and in the tragedy written by Curatius Maternus referred to at the start of Tacitus' *Dialogus de Oratoribus* (dramatic date 74 CE). It is to the inspiration of *exempla* like Cato rather than to the theories of Zeno and other Greek philosophers that we need to look in order to understand the phenomenon known as the 'Stoic opposition' in

⁴⁰ Shaw (1985) 52.

the Flavian period. *Exempla* generate *exempla*, as shown by the death under Nero's orders of Thrasea Paetus, himself author of a biography of Cato (Plut. *Cat. Min.* 25.37),⁴¹ who, as he is about to die, says to Helvidius Priscus: *Specta, iuuenis; et omen quidem dii prohibeant, ceterum in ea tempora natus es quibus firmare animum expediat constantibus exemplis* ('Observe, young man; and may the gods avert the omen, but you were born into an age when it is desirable to strengthen your will with steadfast *exempla*', Tac. *Ann.* 16.25). Helvidius carries forward into the reign of Vespasian the duty to live up to the example of his philosophical *maiores*.

This record of Roman Stoicism made the philosophers vulnerable to political opportunists who found it expedient to depict the philosophy as lending itself inevitably to treasonous criticism of the emperor's performance. If anyone can be said to have created the 'Stoic opposition' it was surely Eprius Marcellus. Rhetoric succeeded in expelling philosophy from political influence and eventually from Rome itself. Under Nero the attack on Thrasea reached its height when Marcellus took over the lead from Cossutianus Capito in the prosecution. Marcellus' speech (*Ann.* 16.28), delivered with 'ferocity and menace' (*toruus ac minax*) and accompanied by inflammatory facial and vocal expressions (*uoce uoltu oculis ardesceret*, 16.29) caused fear among the senators and had soldiers reaching for their weapons. For their victory in driving Thrasea to his death, in a campaign Tacitus unambiguously declares to have been endorsed by Nero (*Nero uirtutem ipsam excindere concupiuit*, 'Nero yearned to extirpate virtue itself', 16.21), Marcellus and Capito received five million *sestertii* each (16.23). The key to the success of Marcellus' case, as Tacitus has summarised it, was his criminalising of passivity and silence, in that Thrasea's absence from the senate and failure to join in the oath of allegiance were portrayed as a kind of implicit censure of the Emperor. In this Marcellus took advantage of the Stoic principle that permitted withdrawal from public life if it was thought to be so incorrigibly corrupt that involvement would inevitably result in failure or entanglement in vice. Thrasea's non-participation, Marcellus was able to claim, was a flagrant insult to his *princeps*, his senatorial colleagues and his country. Marcellus' association with Nero and reputation as a *delator* ('informer', *Hist.* 4.6) exposed him to reprisals after Nero's fall,

⁴¹ See also Griffin (1984) 282 n. 30.

especially as it seems that Vespasian had been a friend of Thrasea and other Stoics (*Hist.* 4.7). At the beginning of book 4 of the *Histories* Tacitus, immediately after his account of Vespasian's formal accession, highlights a confrontation on the floor of the senate between Helvidius and Marcellus that seems designed by the historian to act as a defining moment for the history of the whole Flavian dynasty.⁴² Helvidius, introduced in a detailed and almost entirely laudatory character sketch (4.5),⁴³ clashes with Marcellus over the manner of selection of a delegation to the new emperor (4.5). Marcellus prefers it to be by lot, Helvidius that it be through nomination by the magistrates under oath of the most suitable persons. The issue underlying this is who are to be the *amici* ('friends') of the new *princeps*, the policy advisors behind the incoming emperor. Helvidius makes his opinion clear that Marcellus should be shown by omission from the delegation to be judged unsuitable for such a position, implying at the same time that Marcellus is guilty of having incited Nero's hostility to his Stoic victims.

Fuisse Vespasiano amicitiam cum Thrasea, Sorano, Sentio; quorum accusatores etiam si puniri non oporteat, ostentari non debere. hoc senatus iudicio uelut admoneri principem quos probet, quos reformidet. nullum maius boni imperii instrumentum quam bonos amicos esse. satis Marcello quod Neronem in exitium tot innocentium impulerit: frueretur praemiis et impunitate, Vespasianum melioribus relinqueret.
(Tacitus, *Historiae* 4.7)

Vespasian was a friend of Thrasea, Soranus and Sentius. If it is not possible for their accusers to be themselves punished, at least they ought not to be put on a pedestal. By this decision the senate will, as it were, indicate to the Emperor who to trust and who to shun. There is no better mechanism for good government than the possession of good friends. It should be sufficient for Marcellus that he pushed Nero into destroying so many innocent people: let him enjoy his remuneration and his impunity, and leave Vespasian to people of better reputation.

Marcellus counterattacks with the political skill of a master tactician (4.8). He deflects the attack from himself personally onto the senate as a whole, pointing out that the initial proposal for selection by lot

⁴² On these events see Pigeon (1992) 235–46 and Levick (1999) 82–88.

⁴³ Chilver (1985) 7: 'He is awarded by Tacitus a character more laudable than that given by the historian to any other man'.

was put forward by the consul designate. He reminds the senators that their interests are bound up with his own, since it was their juridical decision no less than his own prosecution speech that had brought Thrasea down. In the process he characterises his adversary as extremist in his politics and arrogant in his pose of virtuous superiority, echoing some of his earlier charges against Thrasea: that the 'obduracy of a few' (*peruicacia quorundam*) is irritating to an emperor; that Helvidius could go ahead and emulate the elevated rectitude of Cato and Brutus (*constantia fortitudine Catonibus et Brutis aequaretur Helvidius*) but he would, for himself, be content to continue his wonted service as a senator; and Helvidius would be well-advised not to attempt to set himself above the Emperor by preaching to him (*suadere etiam Prisco ne supra principem scanderet, ne Vespasianum . . . praecceptis coerceret*). The senate decides against Helvidius' proposal; not surprisingly it is Marcellus who becomes the governor of Asia, attains a second consulship and enjoys Vespasian's favour until his mysterious fall from grace in 79 CE. Further clashes are recorded in the *Histories* (4.43), but it is in the *Dialogus* where Tacitus attests to Marcellus' enormous wealth (8.1–2) and celebrity as the paramount orator of that period (13.4). His defeat of Helvidius is unambiguously attributed to his greater rhetorical expertise and experience:

Quid aliud infestis patribus nuper Eprius Marcellus quam eloquentiam suam opposiuit, qui accinctus et minax disertam quidem sed inexercitata et eius modi certaminum rudem Heluidii sapientiam elusit.

(Tacitus, *Dialogus de Oratoribus* 5.7)

What else did Eprius Marcellus use recently when the senators were antagonistic to him but his eloquence; armed for action and intimidating, he outmanoeuvred the philosophy of Helvidius who, fluent as he was, lacked the technique and experience for that mode of combat.

The Tacitean portrayal of the Stoics as opponents of the Flavian emperors makes sense. Motivated by *exempla* rather than theory, Helvidius carried the torch passed on to him by Thrasea. At the same time it was to the advantage of powerful interests, whose wealth, influence and survival were at stake, to ensure that the Stoics continued to be disaffected and to be perceived as intractable opponents of the Principate. With an orator of the calibre of Marcellus at their head, they exploited the traditional Roman distrust of philosophy and re-invented Stoicism as a form of treason, a process that was already at work under Nero. Stoics had nowhere to hide because

even non-participation in politics had been re-interpreted as a type of rebellion. Stoic biography, the main literary vehicle for passing on *exempla* to another generation of philosophers, was condemned, the books were burnt, and the biographers (like Arulenus Rusticus and Herennius Senecio) executed (*Agr.* 2). Tacitus' own ambivalence towards the Stoics (and the widespread hostility to it in the second century) reflects the degree to which it had been identified with political dissent under the Flavians.

In a review of recent revisionist biographies of Roman Emperors, including Domitian, Wiseman rejects the assumption that the ancient literary sources like Tacitus and Suetonius have systematically distorted the historical record, and accuses many modern historians of a lack of what he calls 'imaginative sympathy'.⁴⁴ Those modern historians are themselves, as he sees it, limited in their historical approach by the ideological outlook of the modern liberal democracies in which they live and work, where people in government cannot be imagined behaving like a Domitian or a Caligula. As a closer analogy for what the Roman imperial court might have been like, he proposes the modern Iraqi dictatorship of Saddam Hussein.⁴⁵ He emphasises the crucial role played in Roman politics by the individual personality of each emperor; and rejects as anachronistic and evasive the approach to Roman history that emphasises administrative continuities to the neglect of court politics and the irrational propensities of the despotic temperament. He goes so far as to suggest that, 'it seems to me to be a kind of treachery to the dead to disbelieve Tacitus and Pliny on merely *a priori* grounds. Are we to doubt their word just because they survived the experience they describe?'⁴⁶ Tacitus was a middle aged senator by the time Domitian was assassinated; Suetonius was in his twenties and later had access to the imperial archives. Their two accounts of his principate concur in portraying the emperor as a universal object of terror and hate (*terribilis cunctis et inuisus*, Suet. *Dom.* 14.1). Juvenal and Pliny, who also

⁴⁴ Wiseman (1996) 21: 'If we assume that our contemporary sources . . . are systematically tendentious, we can feel free to recreate the "real" emperor *a priori*, independently of the evidence'. Levick (1999) 200 also expresses scepticism about the new whitewashed Domitian.

⁴⁵ One might also cite the bafflement many westerners felt at the news of the massacre in 2001 of most of the Nepalese royal family by the crown prince, apparently because of a conflict over dynastic marriage arrangements.

⁴⁶ Wiseman (1996) 23.

knew life under Domitian at first hand, provide all the corroborating evidence one might require. Historians who seek to exculpate Domitian by rejecting the consistent and coherent story told by these witnesses seem to be applying rules of evidence to which no judicial system would ever consent. It seems that the standard of proof in the court of history has been raised much higher than 'beyond a reasonable doubt'.

20. THE TRIUMPH OF FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS

Mary Beard

Just Imagine . . .

Just imagine it was a new discovery. An account of an ancient war written by a man who had served on both sides of the conflict. Not simply a war, but the violent insurrection of a provincial community against their Roman overlords, violently suppressed. The degree zero of Roman imperialism. The author, the luckiest traitor ever. Escaping, so he tells us, from a suicide pact that killed thirty-eight of his compatriots, he gets taken up and feted by the Roman high command, themselves soon to be engaged in a struggle with even bigger stakes—civil war, and the takeover of the empire itself. That is the story that hangs over the end of the account of ‘his’ war. With his outrageously self-serving apologetic and his delicious bias towards the new rulers, he leads us right to the heart of the hottest spot in the whole of Roman imperial politics: dynastic change, the management of succession, the repackaging of civil war into legitimate transition of power. And all this told from the point of view of a self-proclaimed insider/outsider, privy to the behind-the-scenes talk of the new imperial house itself, but writing in a language not his own and from a quite different cultural and religious perspective. A classic symbol of the multicultural labyrinth that was the Roman empire.

This is the kind of text that ancient historians and literary critics would die for. It is the kind of text that makes the study of Greco-Roman antiquity so much richer than that of almost any other ancient society. The kind of text we just can’t get enough of.

Snubbing Josephus

What I have described is, of course, a text that has been known for centuries: the *Bellum Judaicum* of Flavius Josephus, the account in Greek of the Jewish Revolt of 66–73 CE, starring the collapse of

Jerusalem to the new Flavian prince Titus, and leading on to the Flavian triumph over the Jews, celebrated in Rome in 71 and the fall of the final Jewish stronghold at Masada in 73; the author, a one-time Jewish rebel leader, and turn-coat, who won the favour of the new Flavian dynasty and was to be comfortably installed in a grace-and-favour residence in Rome, where—now as a Roman citizen—he wrote his history of the war under the blessing of the imperial *imprimatur* (literally, so he claims, ‘the emperor Titus . . . personally put his own stamp on my volumes and bade me publish them’, ὁ μὲν γὰρ αὐτοκράτωρ Τίτος . . . χαράξας τῇ ἑαυτοῦ χειρὶ τὰ βιβλία δημοσιῶσαι προσέταξεν, Joseph. *Vit.* 363). Despite all this, the *Bellum Judaicum* is a text that has rarely attracted much notice in mainstream classical studies. In fact, with only a few notable exceptions,¹ most classicists have passed Josephus firmly by on the other side. The *Cambridge History of Greek Literature*, for example, though managing a few judicious words about such walk-on players as Hermogenes of Tarsus and Crates of Thebes, has nothing whatsoever to say on Josephus.² And its more recent rivals in the broad history of classical literature or of the classical world do little, if at all, better.³

Not that, in other intellectual traditions, Josephus has escaped the most intense and detailed attention. Turn for a moment to Jewish studies, the history of Judaism and of Judaea, and there you will find an embarrassment of riches on the *Bellum Judaicum*, as well as on the other works of Josephus (the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, the *Contra Apionem* and autobiographical *Vita*).⁴ This, paradoxically, is part of

¹ Most notably, Rajak's *Josephus* (1983) appeared, alongside Suetonius, Lucian, Propertius and Cicero, in a series promisingly entitled *Classical Life and Letters*. And it was a reading of Josephus that (so Millar [1977] xi claims) launched the project that was to become Millar (1977)—*The Emperor in the Roman World*. Belatedly, Walbank (1995) 273–85 had a shot at reading Josephus alongside his other, earlier, renegade, Polybius; and Wiseman (1991) expertly resurrected some Roman history from the *Antiquitates Iudaicae*. Now, at last, Maud Gleason has turned an eye to Josephus as a cultural ‘text’ in the most up-to-the-minute sense of the word in Gleason (2001) 50–85.

² Easterling and Knox (1985). The omission is all the stranger given the aggressively Thucydidean spin that Josephus puts on his history of the war, and is not simply to be explained as literary exclusion of Jewish traditions: for Philo of Alexandria gets his fair share of the limelight.

³ Nothing at all, for example, in Taplin (2000), and just one sentence (pp. 201–2) in almost 900 pages of Boardman, Griffin and Murray (1986). Dihle (1994) manages to accommodate him (pp. 167–71) only by re-dating him to the Julio-Claudian period, in the sub-category of ‘Jewish Literature’.

⁴ These other works have fared equally poorly within classical studies—despite

the problem. For the disciplinary policemen, who so effectively patrol the frontiers of 'Classics' and the various sub-disciplines of Mediterranean history, have been hard at work here. Just as they once ensured that no 'classicist' would count the Acts of the Apostles as a 'classical' source, and for a long time managed to cordon off the history of Egypt as if it were the preserve of 'Egyptologists' alone, so they have allowed Josephus to be claimed by (or cavalierly left to, depending on your point of view) students of Jewish history, religion, literature and culture. Despite some vocal pleas to the contrary, to which I hope to add, most of us who work on the classical world have come to assume that Josephus is somehow off limits, that his work is 'about' Jews and Judaea, not Rome and the Romans.⁵

But other factors too have encouraged classicists to snub Josephus, and, in particular, his *Bellum Judaicum*. What we might now see as the most provocative challenges of Josephus as a writer, combined with his distinctive historical and literary voice in the *Bellum Judaicum*, have regularly been taken as valid reasons for treating his text with extreme caution—and, frankly, best kept at a distance. Even among students of Judaism, there is rarely a good word to be found on Josephus' 'reliability' as a descriptive analyst of the Jewish revolt and of the subsequent rise to power of the Flavian dynasty. At best, he is accused of 'inveterate sloppiness' and a sometimes wilful disregard for chronology.⁶ At worst, his whole account of the war is criticised as the misleading product of a self-serving traitor, eager to cast himself and his new patrons (notably Titus) in an undeservedly favourable light. Failing, or refusing, to see the revolt as a 'complex interplay of political, social and economic issues', Josephus puts the blame

the fact that, as the title hints, the *Antiquitates Iudaicae* owes at least part of its inspiration to Dionysius' *Antiquitates Romanae*, and that the *Vita*, although not an autobiography 'of the interior modern kind' (Rajak [1973] 6), is a major example of Roman imperial first-person 'life-writing'. The sheer quantity of material on Josephus within Judaic studies defies the limits of a footnote (and is inevitably varied in quality). Among recent works in English, with half an eye on the Greco-Roman world as well as the Jewish, note: Cohen (1979); Bilde (1988); Mader (2000). Vidal-Naquet (1980) stands out as an impassioned work of Jewish cultural and political history, by one whose day job is as a Hellenist.

⁵ The bridge between Josephus and the classical world in general is found, if anywhere, in studies of the history of Judaea as a Roman province (e.g., Goodman [1987]) or of the Jews under Roman rule (e.g., Smallwood [1976]); but even here the focus tends to remain Jewish rather than Roman in the broadest sense.

⁶ Cohen (1979) 232. I shall show below that Josephus' chronological inexactitude can play an important rhetorical role in his argument.

squarely and unfairly on factional divisions among the insurgents and on an irresponsible and disreputable minority of out-and-out revolutionaries;⁷ while, at the same time, he churns out cloying eulogies of his new imperial master (magnanimously sparing the less heinous of the enemy, scarcely holding back the tears at the sight of the devastation of Jerusalem, only reluctantly consenting to be cruel).⁸ A 'propagandist'; 'not to be trusted'; 'disingenuous'; 'tendentious'; 'partiality . . . in an extreme form'.⁹ There is hardly a dissenting voice, to suggest that, for example, the obvious bias towards the Flavian cause, the axes ground on Titus' behalf, could be exactly what makes the *Bellum Judaicum* such a valuable historical document; or to raise the question of what counts as a reliable description and objective analysis of a war, any war, but civil war especially.¹⁰

Complicated issues of authorship have also turned people away from the *Bellum Judaicum*. At the beginning of his narrative, Josephus explains that his Greek text is, in fact, a 'version' of his earlier account of the conflict written in his native language, probably Aramaic (*BJ* 1.3).¹¹ And elsewhere he states that he has had to work hard at mastering the Greek language (*AJ* 20.263) and, indeed, engaged 'assistants for the Greek idiom' (τισι πρὸς τὴν Ἑλληνίδα φωνὴν συνεργοῖς, *Ap.* 1.50) when writing the *Bellum Judaicum*. What all this means is very uncertain. Whether you imagine that our text of the *Bellum Judaicum* is a 'straight' translation of some Aramaic predecessor, or a freer adaptation, only loosely based on the earlier book, depends (ironically) on how you translate his Greek term μεταβαλὼν ('Ἑλλάδι γλώσση μεταβαλὼν ἃ . . . τῇ πατρίῳ συντάξας, 'adapting for the Greek tongue what'/'translating into the Greek tongue what . . . [I had] put

⁷ The standard 'case against' is conveniently summarised by Schürer (1973) 57; Millar (1993) 366; Mader (2000) 10–17 (quote p. 11). Other versions of the critique tend to reach similarly unfavourable conclusions on Josephus' quality as a historian; see, for example, Baer (1971) 127–90, discussed, critiqued and nuanced by Mader (2000) esp. 7–10.

⁸ Yavetz (1975) 411–72 collects and analyses Josephus' positive judgements on Titus and contrasts them with the 'unanimously negative' Talmudic tradition (including the story that Titus made love to a prostitute on a scroll of the Law in the Holy of Holies—and was punished by God who sent a gnat to climb up his nose and make a constant noise in his head, by knocking against his brain!).

⁹ These, tendentious, excerpted quotations are drawn from Cohen (1979) 232; Goodman (1990) 39; Levick (1999) 3; Schwartz (1990) 15; Griffin (2000) 4.

¹⁰ Though Rajak (1983) 4–6 tentatively suggests that a study of Josephus might help us to reflect on our own assumptions about the value and purpose of history.

¹¹ See Rajak (1983) 230–2 for a full discussion of Josephus' mother tongue.

together in my native tongue', *BJ* 1.3)—which could, of course, indicate either. How far you take at face value his claims of inadequacy in Greek depends not only on your judgement of the style of the books (give or take those 'assistants'), but also on how far you suppose that Josephus himself had internalised the rhetorical culture of the Greco-Roman world, which was honed on such protestations. What you think the 'assistants' (συνεργοί) did is anyone's guess; and hunches vary from a fully ghostwritten project (on this model, it would have the assistants rather than Josephus who cast the whole work in a Thucydidean frame) to some minor repair work on the author's spelling and grammar.¹² In our own intellectual climate where the relationship of the 'author' to the words on the page has been increasingly called into question, this engaging uncertainty about who wrote 'Josephus' and in what language(s), ought really to have captured critical imagination. Actually critics have kept a safe distance.

Date and chronology have played a part too. It is not just a question of a predictably dead-end set of disputes about when exactly in the Flavian period the *Bellum Judaicum* (or different sections of it) was written and 'published';¹³ it is also the case that the overall Flavian date itself has worked against the celebrity of the *Bellum Judaicum*. Just imagine . . . if our author had been an Egyptian renegade from Octavian's war against Cleopatra, if he had been installed in Rome to write an Augustan version of the conflict, and if he had struggled with his inadequate Latin to offer us an eye-witness glimpse of Augustus' triple triumph. No disciplinary frontiers, no accusations of outrageous bias or sneaky ghostwriting would in that case have kept him from the very top of our literary or historical agenda. For the truth is that some periods always cast more lustre on their writers and chroniclers than others; and it is this arbitrariness of fame that the present volume seeks to expose.¹⁴

¹² The debates are clearly reviewed by Rajak (1983) 46–64, 233–6. The strongest claims about the role of the assistants are to be found in Thackeray (1929); amongst other things, he fancied that he could distinguish the work of different co-workers by tracing the prevalence of Thucydidean or Sophoclean echoes (the Thucydidean hack versus the Sophoclean assistant).

¹³ Tracking Domitianic revisions inserted into a Vespasianic substratum is a common sport (though generally based on the (preposterous) assumption that explicit praise of Domitian indicates a Domitianic date). A slice of the debate is reviewed by Feldman (1984) 379; more recently, see Schwartz (1986) 373–86 for the claim that book 7 underwent three recensions, under Vespasian, Domitian and Nerva/Trajan.

¹⁴ 'Arbitrariness' is a slight exaggeration, which intentionally skates over some of

My chapter aims to shed some specifically Flavian light on one passage of the seventh and final book of the *Bellum Judaicum*: the virtuosic account of the triumphal procession of Titus and Vespasian in 71 CE, celebrating their victory over the Jews; a ceremony now better known in concrete form, from the commemorative Arch of Titus in the Roman Forum, and its (in)famous relief sculptures that monumentalise the holy objects of the Temple as Roman spoils.¹⁵ I hope to show how Josephus prompts us to understand this occasion not simply as the patriotic marker of another successful Roman massacre, but as the inaugural moment of the new dynasty—a combination (much more familiar to us from the art and ceremony of late antiquity)¹⁶ of imperial *adventus*, victory parade and accession ritual. I shall in other words be exploring this triumph as the Flavian *coronation*, the official launch party and press night of the Flavian dynasty. In the process, I trust I shall make it clear that the Flavian story of Flavius Josephus is worth all the attention we can give it.

Getting the Show on the Road

Book 7 is the black sheep of the *Bellum Judaicum*. Although it culminates in a dramatic finale with the capture of Masada, most readers concerned with the history of the Jewish revolt feel that in this book Josephus' eye has lost the ball, the focus of interest dissipated. Gone is the 'unusually clear and coherent structure of *Bell.* 1–6', in its place 'formal incoherence', 'extraneous material' and 'inconsistencies'. One minute he is dealing with Titus' visit to Caesarea, the next with the problems of the Jews in Antioch, the next with Domitian's actions (his 'supposed campaigns') against Civilis in Germany, and so on.¹⁷

the historiographical complexities. Consider, for example, the different reputations of Tacitus' *Annales* and *Historiae*. Do we value the former because it is about our 'favourite' period of history—or have, in part at least, the *Annales* themselves made it our favourite period? Are the *Historiae* simply less interesting? Or is it the straight-jacket of the historiographical tradition that makes the dramatic and violent accession of Rome's second imperial dynasty always play second fiddle to the establishment of the first?

¹⁵ This is discussed in Henderson, pp. 229–254. I use the word concrete advisedly. Nineteenth-century restoration means that—relief panels apart—much less of the fabric of the Arch is ancient than you would like to believe.

¹⁶ MacCormack (1981) 17–61.

¹⁷ All quotes are from Schwartz (1986) 373–86; it is these 'inconsistencies' that led Schwartz to speculate on three different recensions of the book.

But we could put this more positively: the author has *changed* rather than lost his *focus*; his increasing concern with the complex aftermath of the revolt *for the Flavians themselves*, as well as for the Jews, must direct his and our gaze to a greater variety of different scenes and places outside Judaea: from Alexandria through Rome to Gaul. He is keeping his eye, in other words, on several balls at the same time. On the one hand, he tracks the fate of different Jewish rebels and communities in the final whimpers of the revolt: the eventual capture of the notorious Simon, who had holed up in part of the network of underground passages when Jerusalem was sacked (*BJ* 7.26–36); the accusation that the Jews had caused the great fire at Antioch (46–62); the final destruction of the three remaining rebel fortresses, ending with Masada (163–406). On the other, he follows the progress—political, geographic and royal—of the new dynasty. Titus’ story begins at the obliteration of Jerusalem in the first chapters of the book, leading on to a tour of the East on his way, ultimately, to Rome: through Caesarea, Berytus, Antioch and Zeugma, back to Jerusalem (to lament the sorry spectacle of devastation), before pushing on to the Flavian ‘home base’ of Alexandria and then to the capital (*BJ* 7.1–20, 23–5, 37–40, 94–122). But interwoven with this is the parallel journey home of Vespasian himself, whose departure from Alexandria Josephus announces just as Titus is making for Caesarea, and whose arrival in Rome is reported half way through the account of the Jews of Antioch (*BJ* 7.21–2, 63–74). Meanwhile the younger princeling, in Italy for the duration of the Jewish revolt, embarks on his own campaign (or a show of one, at least): immediately after Vespasian’s return, we learn of Domitian’s expedition to deal with the Gauls and Germans, followed by *his* glorious return to the city, victory accomplished (*BJ* 7.75–88).¹⁸ To be sure, it is hard to keep the different movements of a trio of dynasts in your head, but Josephus repeatedly emphasises that we should try: there is careful cross-referencing between the different routes and timescales; and Titus’ journey is notably interspersed with ‘family affairs’—he celebrates brother Domitian’s birthday in magnificently

¹⁸ At best, Josephus makes the very most of Domitian’s involvement in the suppression of this revolt; at worst, he is inventing the victory of a Flavian prince out of the hard work of his lieutenants. A significantly different line is taken in the lengthy account through Tac. *Hist.* 4–5.

bloody style at Caesarea, and Vespasian's yet more grandly a month later at Berytus (*Bj* 7.37–40).¹⁹

The celebration of the triumph at Rome in summer 71 CE is the centrepiece of the whole book (*Bj* 7.123–57). It represents Titus' first public appearance in the city, so formally heralding his return home; and, as Josephus emphasises, it marks the first moment when the new dynasty, father plus two sons, were on display *together* as 'the imperial family' in the two years since Vespasian had first been acclaimed emperor by troops in Egypt on 1 July 69. Triumphal *ekphrasis* regularly offered Greco-Roman writers an opportunity to explore, and to re-improvise, the shifting interplay of politics and theatricality, showmanship and imperialism, that the triumph signified;²⁰ and Josephus uses the opportunity to the full.

His procession (*Bj* 7.131–53) starts from the Campus Martius and leads through the city to the Capitoline: the imperial couple, Vespasian and Titus, in a pair of chariots, Domitian trotting alongside; the prisoners in advance, featuring the unfortunate Simon who was by 'time-honoured custom' (παλαιὸν πάτριον, 153) tied in a noose, flogged and executed before the party made its way up to the Capitoline temple (153–4); the Roman troops, marching through the city on their stomachs after a hearty breakfast at the emperor's expense (129); and, most lavishly described of all in Josephus' account, the countless spoils (148–51). Pride of place on the sculptures of the triumphal arch go to the plunder from the Temple itself—the Menorah and the great golden table for the shew-bread, heaved along in the procession on the backs of some burly porters. Josephus lingers on this holy loot too, but not until he has rehearsed the other treasures that made the occasion so 'impossible to describe' (ἀμήχανον . . . εἰπεῖν, 7.132): the gold, silver and ivory, embroidered cloth, the gems, the extraordinary 'floats', three or four stories high, draped in tapestries vividly depicting the different stages of the war.

The nature of spectacle, the collapsing boundary between representation and reality is one of the commonest themes in ancient accounts of triumphal celebrations. Here Josephus emphasises the theatricality of the occasion—quite literally, in fact, for the whole

¹⁹ See below, p. 553.

²⁰ For this interplay in detail, see Beard (forthcoming); other aspects of the triumph in general are well discussed by Künzl (1988) esp. 9–29 for Flavian aspects.

pageant drives off 'through the theatres' (διὰ τῶν θεάτρων, *BJ* 7.131), to make sure everyone gets a good view. This is a show; and seeing is what matters. On the other hand, the spectacle is so convincing, the representation so consummate, that it almost ceases to count as representation at all. The whole effect, we are told, is to bring the campaigns before the eyes of the crowd 'as if they were present themselves' (ὡς παροῦσι, *BJ* 7.146).²¹ With *mimesis* like this, who needs reality? But Josephus pushes that puzzle further. War, as we all know, is dangerous; soldiers get killed. Watching a triumphal procession, on the other hand, should be a safe spectator sport. Except that here it's the representational strategies that constitute the danger, albeit in their own way: those massive floats were a wonder, he writes, but a worry too. Weren't they all too likely to topple and crash, with devastating consequences (καὶ γὰρ διὰ μέγεθος ἦν δεῖσαι τῷ βεβαίῳ τῆς φορᾶς ἀπιστήσαντα, 'indeed, their massive size was cause for alarm and doubt as to their stability', *BJ* 7.139)? What is more, on the top of each of these constructions stood a Jewish general from one of the captured cities, adopting the very 'pose in which he had been taken' (ὅν τρόπον ἐλήφθη, *BJ* 7.147). Nothing so unusual about that: it was one of the standard stunts of a triumphal procession to show off the star enemy prisoners, acting out the circumstances of their own defeat. But on this occasion, of course, there's an added piquancy, disrupting yet further the conventions of representation and, in this case, writing. Anyone who had read the rest of the *Bellum Judaicum* would have known exactly where in this procession its author belonged. But for the grace of Titus, Josephus himself would have been on display, re-enacting his own capture; not writing the show up from a (no doubt) ring-side seat.

Triumphal processions also served to model Roman imperialism: they put on show the fruits of conquest at the very heart of the empire; they brought the empire to Rome, for all to witness (or read about). Josephus' account offers different ways of making sense of the empire that was on display. On the one hand, imperialism signals plenitude, voracious and beyond words. The magnitude of the Roman empire was demonstrated by the sheer quantity of riches that were 'gathered together' (ἀθρόα, 133). Rome's property *was* the

²¹ Note too how the description of the images on the tapestries (*BJ* 7.142–5) shades into a narrative of the war itself.

world; on show was more or less the equivalent of the whole sum of human acquisition over the ages, now standing for Rome alone (σχεδὸν γὰρ ὅσα τοῖς πάποτ' ἀνθρώποις ἐνδαιμονήσασιν ἐκτήθη κατὰ μέρος . . . ταῦτ' ἐπὶ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ἀθρόα τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίας ἔδειξε τὸ μέγεθος, 'Almost as many things as human beings have had the good fortune to acquire one by one . . . these now gathered together on that day demonstrated the magnitude of Rome's empire', *Bj* 7.133). As a consequence the natural order risked being upturned: arcane and precious objects were carried along in such profusion that the notion of rarity itself was called into question. The triumph took what was (really) rare and made it common (τοσοῦτοι παρηνέχθησαν ὥστε μαθεῖν ὅτι μάτην εἶναί τι τούτων σπάνιον ὑπειλήφαμεν, 'so many [gems] were carried past as to correct our foolish misunderstanding that any of them were rare', *Bj* 7.135). On the other hand, for Josephus, natural forces provide the best analogy for the image of Roman imperialism that the triumph conjures: you could see masses of silver, gold and ivory, 'not as if they were being carried in procession, but flowing past, so to speak, like a river' (οὐχ ὥσπερ ἐν πομπῇ κομιζόμενον . . . ἀλλ' ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις ῥέοντα ποταμόν, *Bj* 7.134). The point here is not only the flooding profusion of riches. Josephus' account offers us a (victim's) glimpse of Roman conquest as unstopably *elemental*; imperialism natural(ised).²²

Crowning Glory

This description of the Jewish triumph, however, has an even more significant part to play in the narrative strategy of book 7. It is not only a ceremony that prompts the kind of 'occasional' reflections I have just been highlighting, it is also a crucial stage in the whole story of Flavian accession: as successful usurpers are turned into an established imperial dynasty; and as Titus himself is transformed from conqueror of Jerusalem to Flavian Caesar.

For Titus, the ceremonies of summer 71 CE are the final episode in a triumphal procession that extended far beyond the confines of Rome. Josephus repeatedly hints that Titus' royal progress around

²² This simple point—that Josephus offers a loser's perspective on Roman conquest—has tended to be obscured by discussions of his theology and his views of the Romans as the new instruments of divine will, e.g., Rajak (1983) 94–103.

the cities of the East is to be seen as a leg of a single journey that started at Jerusalem itself and ended up, triumphantly, on the Capitoline Hill. In part, this is matter of practicalities. At various points on his journey we see Titus already making arrangements for 'the triumph he was preparing to celebrate in Rome' (ὃν ἐπιτελεῖν ἐν Ῥώμῃ παρεσκευάζετο θρίαμβον, *Bj* 7.36): storing up the booty (20), earmarking prisoners for exhibit (36), selecting those 'who stood out in stature and physical beauty' (μεγέθει τε καὶ κάλλει σωματῶν ὑπερβάλλοντας, 118). But some of the distinctive theatrical moments of the Roman procession itself are already anticipated in the cities of the East. For Titus, as conquering hero, complete no doubt with his retinue of troops and captives, follows up his arrival at each place with the launch of shows and spectacles. Some of these might have looked much like the standard butchery of the Roman arena, for example, when brother Domitian's nineteenth birthday is celebrated with the slaughter of more than 2,500 Jewish prisoners with the usual mixture of hand to hand fighting, wild beasts and human torches (*Bj* 7.38). But when he turns to describe the 'costly spectacles' put on in Berytus and the other cities of Syria, Josephus emphasises precisely those mimetic effects in the re-enactment of Roman victory that were so characteristic of the triumph itself. 'The Jewish prisoners,' he writes, 'were used to make a display of their own destruction' (τῶν Ἰουδαίων τοὺς αἰχμαλώτους εἰς ἐπίδειξιν τῆς ἑαυτῶν ἀπωλείας ἀποχρώμενος), just as the generals on the top of the triumphal floats were made to act out their own capture (*Bj* 7.96).²³ Destabilising the boundaries of triumphal ritual as it is usually understood, Josephus is asking us to see Titus' progress to Rome as a series of repeated *triumphal events*.²⁴

As soon as Titus reaches Rome, the dynasty is in place. For Josephus Titus' arrival in Italy is even 'more splendid' (λαμπρότερον, *Bj* 7.119) than Vespasian's—for the simple reason that it was a family affair; his father was there to welcome him (119–20). And, with Domitian already on the scene, what really delights the crowd is seeing 'the trio all together *in the same spot*' (τοὺς τρεῖς ἐν ταύτῳ γεγονότας,

²³ A passage missed by Gleason (2001) 50–85 in her discussion of 'body-language'. The difference between the generals and these prisoners, of course, is that the generals lived to tell the tale. For the mimetic effects of gladiatorial games, see Coleman (1990) 44–73.

²⁴ A point made, by a different route, by Ando (2000) 256.

Bj 7.120–1). In the dirty reality of imperial politics the next few days must have been crucial, crammed with business, settling scores and trading favours. But Josephus' account dispatches them in just four words (οὐ πολλῶν δ' ἡμερῶν διελθουσῶν, 'not many days later', *Bj* 7.121), so that Titus' arrival seamlessly launches the triumphal procession, which itself thus neatly doubles as the dynasty's first joint appearance in the chariots of power, and so also as the celebration of its accession.

When the big day starts, Vespasian and Titus are introduced to us as αὐτοκράτορες (*Bj* 7.123)—a term, like *imperator*, which strategically straddles that ambivalent divide between 'victorious general' and 'reigning emperor'. In the earlier books, Josephus has used the word in both distinct senses: while the Temple burned, the soldiers hailed Titus αὐτοκράτορα (*imperator*/'victorious') μετ' εὐφημιῶν ('with acclamations', *Bj* 6.316); when the Flavian army under Mucianus entered Rome, the people 'acclaimed Vespasian emperor' (αὐτοκράτορα Οὐεσπασιανὸν εὐφῆμει, *Bj* 4.655; see also 4.546, 592, 601, etc.). Here both senses must be in play. At daybreak, 'in laurel and purple', the new rulers address their loyal troops. The soldiers shout back in acclamation, ratifying their enthusiasm not only for the ceremony, but also inevitably for the new dynastic arrangements of which that is a symbol. Despite the trappings of triumphal ritual, it all looks suspiciously like one of those Julio-Claudian occasions when the new emperor goes instantly to the soldiers to check out his hold on power; indeed the very action of the Roman populace 'acclaiming' Vespasian emperor for the first time (εὐφῆμει) is emphatically repeated by the troops on this occasion (ἐπευφῆμει, *Bj* 7.126; εὐφημίαν, 127; and later [εὐφῆμησαν, 155], greeting the death of Simon).

Not that anything is being done out of step with the rules, of course. As befits a spokesman for a new regime with little more than a nasty civil war behind it, Josephus goes out of his way to assure his readers that everything is absolutely kosher. Adjectives such as 'customary' (νενομισμένος) and 'traditional' (πατριός) are scattered through the text to validate almost anything from the triumphal breakfast to the purple outfits. This may be a new deal, the message goes, but it's rooted in this oldest of Roman ceremonies and in how (we imagine) we've always performed it.²⁵

²⁵ Traditional robes (*Bj* 7.124), prayers (128, 155), breakfast (129), murder (153), and so on.

When the procession is over, the star prisoner executed and the sacrifices complete, Josephus briskly sends his imperial family for the first time 'back to the palace' (εἰς τὸ βασιλεῖον, *BJ* 7.155). Before returning to the Jewish revolt and the final destruction of the three remaining strongholds that brings the book to a close, he himself pauses to reflect on what exactly the city had been celebrating on that day of triumph. He offers three answers: first, victory against her enemies; second, the end of civil war; and finally, rising hopes for good times to come (*BJ* 7.157). Any doubt that those good times are to be defined as *Flavian* good times, should be dispelled by the paragraph that follows. For, wilfully out of chronological order (as Josephus' critics have often gleefully pointed out, we have suddenly jumped four years to 75 CE), he rounds off his triumphal description with Vespasian's foundation of the Temple of Peace. Packed with spoils, this temple complex became, as Josephus points out, a microcosm of the whole world; men, he says, had previously wandered the length and breadth of the planet to see the treasures gathered and stored up here. Vast in scale (more than rivalling the adjacent Forum of Augustus in size), teeming with luxury, the product of a 'superhuman conception', this was the permanent memorial to the Flavian triumph, and to the new dynasty itself (*BJ* 7.158–62).²⁶

The Triumph of the Flavians

There is, and was, more than one answer to the question of when Flavian rule began; inevitably so. Different dates chosen to start the calendar of power brought different advantages and disadvantages in the difficult business of massaging the transition to a new dynasty, born of civil war. We know, for example, that 1 July 69, the date of the Vespasian's acclamation by the troops in Egypt, was one favoured option: it had the advantage of repackaging much of Vitellius' 'reign' as 'rebellion' against the legitimate Flavian emperor, and so helping to justify the particularly nasty series of Flavian reprisals against the Vitellians; the disadvantage was that it all too clearly

²⁶ Built, he emphasises, πάσης ἀνθρωπίνης κρείττον ἐπινοίας ('with a design surpassing all human thought', *BJ* 7.158). For remains of this complex, see Claridge (1998) 153–6.

exposed the uncomfortable truth that it was the army (not the senate, or anyone else who thought they had a stake) who counted when it came to making an emperor.²⁷ The Cancellaria Reliefs, on the other hand, suggest that there was also mileage in emphasising the moment that Vespasian himself first reached Rome (when most of the dirty work had been done and could safely be blamed on someone else).²⁸

Josephus' account offers still other possibilities. He brought together (so far as we can tell, for the first time—at least in this explicit form)²⁹ the elements of imperial 'arrival' (*aduentus*) in Rome, triumph and accession ritual, in a combination that was to become the hallmark of imperial accession later in the empire.³⁰ It had the advantage of reasserting the position of the city of Rome as king-maker (against any mutterings about emperors being made elsewhere). It heralded the arrival of a new dynasty rather than just a new emperor, succession assured and visible in the shape of two grown-up sons.³¹ And it echoed one of the main ideas lurking barely under the surface of all official Roman imperial ideology, that emperors and conquest are inseparable.

It is possible that Josephus put this particular spin on the events himself: the eyes of an outside observer seeing connections and significances that insiders might have missed. But it is much more likely that his account and understanding of the triumph owes a good deal to the interpretation that his Flavian patron themselves wished to put on the event. As often, the worst crimes of Josephus as a writer can be turned to his advantage. If we want to understand how any political regime wants itself to be seen, where better to go than to the writings of one of its lackeys? With Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum* we are probably getting as close as we ever can to the 'official version' (or one of the 'official versions') of the Flavian accession.

²⁷ Levick (1999) 43, 70.

²⁸ These are discussed by Henderson, pp. 229–254.

²⁹ Of course every first time has a significant predecessor; and it is impossible not to think of Octavian/Augustus' return and triple triumph in something like these terms.

³⁰ MacCormack (1981) 17–61.

³¹ For the Flavians the 'heir and a spare' principle was to come back and bite, when the spare (Domitian) turned out to be more of a liability than a guarantee. Augustus' devastating bad luck in finding a successor at least had the advantage of keeping his options open.

It is fairly certain that the inner Flavian cabal did devote some energy to the problem of their own legitimacy; to ensuring that the Roman world, in its various constituencies, took on board a new emperor from nowhere, with all the usual skeletons in the cupboard. Someone, after all, must have masterminded the *Lex de Imperio*, which managed seamlessly (almost) to stitch Vespasian into the legitimate imperial past.³² Someone must have taken care to disseminate 'news' of Vespasian's Egyptian miracles, with all their allure of divinity that would have gone down well in some quarters.³³ They also had good reason—in addition to all the triumphal factors I have already stressed—to hammer home Flavian victory *against the Jews*, in particular. On more than one occasion new Roman dynasties needed to clothe victory in civil war with the guise of victory over a 'proper' enemy. Octavian found Cleopatra a useful foreign foe to headline what was to all intents and purposes a triumph over Roman citizens and one-time cronies. So Vespasian and Titus could celebrate victory over the Jews as an elegant cover for their victory against the Roman supporters of Vitellius. It was not a perfect solution; for it would hardly have taken the most cynical commentator to suggest that the suppression of rebellion in an existing Roman province was not exactly a foreign conquest. All the same, the Jews were the most plausibly foreign enemy available; there was every logical reason to push this triumph as hard as (dis)belief would allow.

And so it seems they did. Although Josephus offers us the only surviving literary account of the events surrounding the great triumph of summer 71 CE, there is a penumbra of material evidence to confirm his view of the ceremony's dynastic and political importance. I have already mentioned the Arch of Titus and the Temple of Peace, both defining monuments of the Flavian dynasty as well as permanent memorials to the Jewish triumph. Imperial coinage too harped on the imagery of this occasion. IUDAEA CAPTA was blazoned across more Roman small change than the literal truth of the claim should honestly have allowed; elsewhere Vespasian appears in his triumphal *quadriga*, and even the Temple of Isis (where the ἀντοκράτορες probably spent the night before the triumph [*BJ* 7.123])³⁴ makes

³² Crawford (1996) 549–54.

³³ Henrichs (1968) 51–80; Levick (1999) 68–9.

³⁴ 'Probably' because, although bed-and-breakfast at the Temple of Isis is an irresistibly attractive idea, the Greek *could* mean only that they spent the night somewhere near the temple.

a guest appearance in coin issues of 71.³⁵ The other literary evidence is frustratingly fragmentary and/or much trickier to interpret. It has often been claimed (not implausibly—but not particularly meaningfully either) that Flavian poetry makes a special feature of triumphs and triumphal imagery;³⁶ and if so, maybe the razzmattaz surrounding the inaugural triumph of the dynasty was somehow responsible. It goes without saying that we would love to know what Tacitus' *Historiae* made of the whole re-entry to Rome, triumph included; but we can get not much further than regretting that we do not. Surprisingly, though, the most seductive (and weighty) speculation concerns the role of this triumph in a literary work that is even more uncompromisingly *lost*.

If there was another writer as much besotted with the Flavians as was Flavius Josephus himself, that writer was the elder Pliny. Though stretches of his *Naturalis Historia* survive, we have lost everything else this impossible, and impossibly loyal, polymath produced. Among the works that have not survived is his history in thirty-one books, taking off (in that classic ancient fashion of *continuance*) from where the earlier, also lost, history of Aufidius Bassus stopped.³⁷ No one knows, for sure, what period Pliny covered (and speculation is not made easier by the even greater shadiness of our knowledge of Bassus). None the less, over the last hundred years or so one hunch has found more support than any other: namely that Pliny finished his history with the joint triumph of Vespasian and Titus in 71 CE; even Ronald Syme carefully concluded that that 'appeared likely'.³⁸ I cannot stress strongly enough that there is no direct evidence for this conclusion whatsoever. But all the same it is hard not to flirt with the idea of following Syme; and so to imagine that not only Josephus, but a second Flavian apparatchik picked up the official spin and made the spectacular ceremonial of 71 the key dynastic moment, where Julio-Claudian history stopped—and Flavian history started.

³⁵ *BMC* 2.xxxii–xxxv, xlii–xlii.

³⁶ See, for example, Taisne (1973) 485–504.

³⁷ Syme (1958) 697–700.

³⁸ Syme (1958) 699; see also Schanz (1935) 782–3; Levick (1999) 93.

21. FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS IN FLAVIAN ROME: READING ON AND BETWEEN THE LINES

Steve Mason

Because Titus Flavius Josephus¹ (37–late 90s CE?) wrote mainly about Judaea, he has been studied chiefly from the perspective of Judaeian *realia*. In general, scholars have occupied themselves with the referential aspect of his corpus, therefore with such techniques for verification as Quellenforschung and the testing of his claims through archaeology.² Even Peter Wiseman's study of Josephus' Roman material (AJ 19.1–273), though Wiseman is otherwise famous for his rhetorical interests,³ is principally concerned with that material's provenance and accuracy.⁴

As a result of this academic tradition, two problem sets normally considered introductory to ancient authors have in the case of Josephus suffered neglect. These are the literary investigation of his legacy—including the shape of each work, the coherence of the corpus and his exploitation of rhetorical devices—and the setting in which he first published his compositions: Flavian Rome.⁵ This chapter strives to unite these neglected lines of inquiry in a preliminary way, by considering the meaning of Josephus' *magnum opus* for its first recipients.

Such an undertaking requires us to read both on and between the lines. Under the principate, almost everyone in elite circles appears

¹ The author refers to himself only as Ἰώσηπος ('Josephus'). The *nomen* 'Flavius' is given by later Christian users of his work (e.g., Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 1.5.3). Since Josephus took the imperial *nomen*, it is highly likely that he completed his citizen's name with the popular *praenomen* Titus, shared by all three Flavian rulers.

² For a synopsis of Josephus scholarship, see Bilde (1988) 123–71. Bilde was unable to find scholarly accounts of the major works' aims and structures (pp. 71, 102, 118). Today there is a growing body of literary-rhetorical analysis, but almost exclusively for narrative segments, notably the biblical paraphrase (e.g., Attridge [1976]; Feldman [1998]; Begg [2000] and for the shorter works (Cohen [1979] and Mason [2001] on the *Vita*; Gerber [1997] on the *Contra Apionem*), still not for the major works or the whole corpus.

³ Cf. Wiseman (1979).

⁴ Wiseman (1991) vii–xv.

⁵ For an initial probe, see Goodman (1994a) 329–38.

to have written and read ironically. Tacitus was a master of irony, obliquely orienting his narratives of earlier periods toward present political concerns.⁶ Audiences were long attuned to such subliminal messages. Noticeable respect for Iulius Caesar's assassins, for example, was ground for suspicion.⁷ The senator Cremutius Cordus was prosecuted in 25 CE on the charge that the praise of Brutus and Cassius in his histories, when these men were generally considered 'bandits and parricides' (*latrones et parricidas*), implied criticism of Tiberius (Tac. *Ann.* 4.34–5). Under Nero, by contrast, Seneca prudently denied Stoic justification to the assassins, averring that 'just kingship' (*rege iusto*) was the optimal form of government (*Ben.* 2.20.2). Tacitus reports other examples of sensitivity to this issue of Caesar's killers (*Ann.* 3.76; 16.7, 22), as does Pliny (*Ep.* 1.17.3).

From at least the autumn of 93 CE, Domitian too became adept at reading between the lines.⁸ He executed Hermogenes of Tarsus for certain 'allusions' (*figurae*) in his history (Suet. *Dom.* 10.1), Rusticus Arulenus and Herennius Senecio for praising long-dead critics of Nero and Vespasian (Suet. *Dom.* 10.3; Tac. *Agr.* 2.1; Plin. *Ep.* 7.19.5; Cass. Dio 67.13.2). Within a year or two of these actions Domitian's wrath reportedly came to encompass 'many' (πολλοί), even high-ranking family members, who had drifted 'into the customs of the Judaeans' (ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη; Cass. Dio 67.14.2; cf. 68.1.2).

Now it was precisely in late 93 or early 94 CE that the priest Josephus published in Rome his work on Judaeian culture (*AJ* 20.267). The foreign aristocrat included in his histories a pointed indictment of Iulius Caesar as the origin of subsequent tyranny and had one of his characters fault Cassius and Brutus for not going far enough inasmuch as they failed to eradicate monarchy (*AJ* 19.184). Josephus retailed a sarcastic story about the succession worries faced by Domitian's model (Suet. *Dom.* 20),⁹ the childless *princeps* Tiberius (*AJ* 18.205–23). We can hardly avoid the question of this work's potential implications in Domitian's Rome.

Thus we face a number of related questions. What is the *Antiquitates Judaicae-Vita* about as a whole and in its parts? What sort of people

⁶ Cf. Plass (1988) 3–68; Kraus and Woodman (1997) 88–97.

⁷ Cf. Wiseman (1991) 78.

⁸ For nuanced treatments of Domitian's 'terror' (89/93–96 CE) see Syme (1983) 121–46; Jones (1992) 182–92; Southern (1997) 114–18.

⁹ Cf. Syme (1958) 422.

constituted its first audience in Rome? What could this work have meant for such an audience?

Context: Josephus in Rome

In the year of Gaius' accession (37 CE), Yosef ben Mattathياهو was born into a priestly-aristocratic family in Jerusalem. He received at least the standard education for his class (*Vit.* 6–12). Before he turned 30, the Judaeen revolt against Rome had broken out. For reasons that are still much debated,¹⁰ he found himself defending the Galilean front against the initial onslaught of legionary and allied forces. His defences did not hold for long, predictably, and he surrendered to Vespasian in July 67 CE; he would claim in retrospect a divine mission to announce the future greatness of the Flavians (*Bj* 3.340–408). After two years of imprisonment and following the eastern legions' acclamation of Vespasian, he was released (*Bj* 4.616–29). He assisted Titus during the final phase of the Jerusalem campaign (*Bj* 5.361–420, 541–7; 6.96–129; *Ap.* 1.49) and then accompanied the victorious general to Rome in early 71 CE (*Vit.* 422).

Once in the capital, Josephus was given citizenship, accommodation in Vespasian's former private house, and a pension of some kind (*Vit.* 423). There he wrote his three surviving works: the seven-volume *Bellum Judaicum*, largely completed by the late 70s CE; the twenty-volume *Antiquitates Judaicae* with its autobiographical appendix, published in 93–94 CE; and the two-volume work traditionally known as *Contra Apionem* some time after that. While living in Rome, he was married for the third or fourth time, to a Judaeen woman of reputable Cretan origin who gave him two sons in addition to the one who had survived from a previous marriage (*Vit.* 427).

Post-war Rome, which was also recovering from the civil upheaval of 68–69 CE, was presumably not a pleasant environment for most expatriate Judaeans. The new *princeps* had vaulted to power largely on the strength of his victory in Judaea.¹¹ He shared with his son Titus a triumph that saw the parading of Jerusalem's treasures and

¹⁰ On the involvement of Josephus' class in the war, see Drexler (1925) 277–312; Cohen (1979); Rajak (1983); Goodman (1987); and Price (1992). Drexler and the latter two attempt to eke out of his narrative a historical picture that contradicts his at the major points. For Josephus' view of the Romans' place in history, see Lindner (1972).

¹¹ Cf. Levick (1999) 53–4.

captives through the streets of Rome (*BJ* 7.115–57); Judaeans slaves once again became plentiful (*BJ* 3.540–1; 7.118). Celebratory coins were issued, depicting the subjection of a rebellious people,¹² and eventually the Arch of Titus went up under Domitian, enshrining the same message. During and after the war, anti-Judaeans reprisals broke out in various cities (*BJ* 2.457–93, 559; 7.108–11, 367–8), possibly in Rome too, although we have no direct evidence of that. Judaeans were now taxed, with the money that formerly had gone to the upkeep of the Jerusalem temple, for the *fiscus Iudaicus* (*BJ* 7.218; Suet. *Dom.* 12.2).¹³ Given the ways in which later Roman authors would mention the war (Tac. *Hist.* 5.1–13; Origen, *C. Cels.* 5.41; Min. Fel. *Oct.* 10, 33; Philostr. *VA* 5.33), it is easy to believe Josephus when he says that the initial histories were disdainful of the Judaeans and flattering of the Romans (*BJ* 1.1–3, 6–8).

At the same time, a variety of literary evidence indicates a keen interest among some Romans in things Judaeans (Suet. *Dom.* 12.2; Tac. *Hist.* 5.5; Arr. *Epict. Diss.* 2.9.20; Juv. *Sat.* 5.14.96–106).¹⁴

We do not know much about the Roman Judaeans community under the Flavians. Our best evidence for their organisation, social levels and self-understanding comes from funerary inscriptions of the second century CE and later.¹⁵ Already a substantial population by the middle of the second century BCE, they had been expelled or disciplined at various junctures thereafter—often on the charge of disseminating their national customs.¹⁶ Aside from Josephus' allusions to more or less constant accusations against him by his compatriots (*Vit.* 424–9),¹⁷ his personal relationship to the Judaeans community is a matter of speculation.¹⁸

¹² Meshorer (1982) 190–7, plate 35. Levick (1999) pl. vi (between pp. 106–7).

¹³ Analysis is in Smallwood (1976) 371–6.

¹⁴ The evidence for Romans' interest in Judaeans culture is controversial. For the evidence, see Leon (1960) 41–5; Smallwood (1976) 376–85; and Feldman (1993) 177–445; for a contrary reading, Goodman (1994b) 60–90; in support of the older view, Mason (1996) 188–95.

¹⁵ Cf. Leon (1960); Rutgers (1995).

¹⁶ Cf. Leon (1960) 1–45.

¹⁷ In keeping with his general view of the fickle masses, Josephus claims that when his compatriots first thought him dead, they mourned him deeply (*BJ* 3.432–7). When they discovered that he was flourishing in Roman custody, however, they accused him of cowardice and betrayal (3.438–41; 3.354). Once he was in Rome, disaffected compatriots considered it more effective to charge him with abetting rebellion (passage given in text).

¹⁸ In *Vit.* 13–16, Josephus describes a trip to Rome before the revolt broke out.

Concerning Josephus' friends and associates in Rome, we have but a few hints. The 'classical conception of Josephus'¹⁹ assumed a simple though erratic model: he first wrote the *Bellum Iudaicum* under direct Flavian commission, in Aramaic and then Greek, as a warning to the Parthians and their allies. At that time, he was a paid favourite of the regime and this allegedly reveals itself in the work's flattery of Vespasian and Titus. Under an anti-intellectual Domitian, however, who allegedly repudiated the friends of his father and brother (Cass. Dio 67.2.1), he lost his livelihood and was compelled to seek the help of the literary patron Epaphroditus named in the later works (*AJ* 1.8; *Vit.* 430; *Ap.* 1.1; 2.196). To Epaphroditus Josephus resourcefully marketed himself as an expert on things Judaean; his *Antiquitates Iudaicae* also attempted, opportunistically, to repair his relationship with his compatriots—perhaps even advocating in Rome for the new rabbinic movement in Judaea.²⁰

Each component of this neat scheme has in principle been laid to rest,²¹ though one occasionally hears ghostly echoes.²² Most important for us, Josephus' later compositions reveal not the slightest embarrassment over the *War* but refer the audience to it as a 'precise' (ἀκριβέστερον, μετ' ἀκριβείας) account (*AJ* 1.1–4, 203; 13.72, 298; 18.11; 20.258–9; *Vit.* 12, 412; *Ap.* 1.54–5). This Josephan habit invites us to imagine a broad continuity of audience in Rome throughout his writing career.

Who, then, were Josephus' friends in Rome? On the one hand, he insinuates a certain familiarity with King Agrippa II (*Vit.* 343, 355–6, 393), the great-grandson of King Herod who had grown up

Once there, he met a Judaean mime-writer or actor named Aliturus, who helped him meet Poppaea. This account, if factual, presupposes some connections with the Judaean community, though it is hard to gauge how such contacts would have held up in his very different post-war circumstances.

¹⁹ See Bilde (1988) 128–41.

²⁰ Weber (1921); Laqueur (1920) 126–7; Thackeray (1929) 27–8; Smith (1956) 67–81; Cohen (1979) 86, 237–41; Attridge (1984) 192–227.

²¹ On the relation of the Greek *War* to the Aramaic: Hata (1975) 89–108; the purpose of the Greek *War*: Lindner (1972); Rajak (1983) 65–143, 185–222; Bilde (1979) 179–202; Bilde (1988) 75–9; its flattery of the Flavians as merely *de rigueur*: Yavetz (1975) 411–32; Josephus' utter lack of privilege or reward under the Flavians: Mason (1998) 74–5; Domitian's treatment of his predecessors' associates: Jones (1992) 59–71; the *Antiquitates Iudaicae* as pro-rabbinic propaganda (presupposing that rabbinic Judaism was already a recognisable entity in the late first century): Grabbe (1992) 593–4.

²² Schwartz (1990) 10; Grabbe (1992) 474.

in Rome and, after the war, become conspicuously successful there (Cass. Dio 65.15.3–5).²³ The king's sister Berenice was Titus' lover in the 70s CE, before the latter's accession (Tac. *Hist.* 2.2; Suet. *Tit.* 7.1). Whereas the Flavians received the *War* only after its completion (and so did not commission it), Josephus claims that Agrippa sent him sixty-two letters about the book, some of these apparently while he was still writing it (*Vit.* 364–7). He gives Agrippa and Berenice the leading roles in articulating his own anti-revolt sentiments in the *War* (*BJ* 2.344–407) and he continues to honour them throughout his works (e.g., *Vit.* 364–7; *Ap.* 1.51). Members of the Herodian family in Rome are *a priori* more likely than the Flavians to have taken an interest in the labours of their capable compatriot.

On the other hand, in his later works Josephus names Epaphroditus and his circle. More important than the identity of this elusive figure²⁴ is what Josephus actually says about him (*AJ* 1.8–9). A solicitous patron, lover of culture and of histories in particular, he has reportedly drafted Josephus into writing, or perhaps completing, the *oeuvre*. Josephus compares him to King Ptolemy II, who had requested a Greek translation of the Judean laws long before (*AJ* 1.10–12). Like the high priest Eleazar, who fulfilled Ptolemy's request, Josephus knows better than to hoard (φθονέω) the Judeans' good things. Magnanimously, he will share these with Epaphroditus and, on his account (or through his mediation, διὰ σέ), with all other lovers of truth (cf. *Ap.* 2.296). Thus Josephus postures as one who has been pressed by a group of Greek-speaking non-Jews in Rome to provide an overview of Judean history and culture. We now need to ask

²³ This success explains Juvenal's hostility toward the *barbarus* ('barbarian', *Sat.* 6.158).

²⁴ There are two known candidates. The freedman Marcus Mettius Epaphroditus (*Suda*; died 96–98 CE), grammarian and literary critic specialising in Greek epic, amassed a large library and was recognised with a statue (*CIL* 6.9454). Those who support his candidacy include Laqueur (1920) 23–30; Thackeray (1929) 53; Rajak (1983) 223; Schwartz (1990) 16–17; Sterling (1992) 239–40 n. 66. Alternatively, Nero's former *libellis*, who helped expose the Pisonian conspiracy and then assisted in the emperor's suicide (Suet. *Ner.* 49; Tac. *Ann.* 15.55; Cass. Dio 63.29), sometime master of the philosopher Epictetus (Arr. *Epict. Diss.* 1.1.20, 19.19–20, 26.11–12), who later appeared in Domitian's court, where he was executed as a warning to other courtiers who might wish to assist an emperor in dying (died 95/96 CE: Suet. *Dom.* 14–15; Cass. Dio 67.14.4), is favoured by Niese (1896) 226–7; Luther (1910) 61–3; Nodet (1990) 4 n. 1; Mason (1998) 98–101. But the name was common enough, also an honorific (Plut. *Sull.* 34).

what the contents of the work that he supplied in response to this request reveal about his audience's values and interests.

Josephus addresses his *Antiquitates Judaicae-Vita*, after Epaphroditus' circle, to the 'entire Greek world' (ἅπασι . . . τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν, *AJ* 1.5, 9; 20.262). Generally speaking, scholars have taken him at his word and imagined a vague international audience: 'the Graeco-Roman world', 'gentile public opinion', 'the Greek world at large', or some similarly abstract combination of Greeks and Jews.²⁵ Given ancient publication practices,²⁶ however, and the need for a community of support around the author and his developing book, we should look first for a real audience in Rome.²⁷ This is especially so because, when he speaks of the Greeks as a body, Josephus is typically disparaging (*AJ* 1.121, 129; *Vit.* 40; *Ap.* 1.2–29; cf. *BJ* 1.13–16)—in the Roman fashion.²⁸ The hope for a vast and indeterminate future readership was made famous by Thucydides (1.22.4) and became a standard line in his successors. No self-respecting historian, including Josephus (*Ap.* 1.53), would *claim* to be writing for some ephemeral interest (cf. Lucian *Hist.* 13). Yet Mark Munn has persuasively argued that even Thucydides had in view pressing circumstances (the eve of the Corinthian war) and a particular audience (the Athenian council in deliberation).²⁹ Munn reads between the lines. Similarly, it is Josephus' original circumstances and the concerns of his audience in Rome, *circa* 93–94 CE, that we seek.

²⁵ Quotations from, respectively: Thackeray (1929) 51; Attridge (1984) 226; Sterling (1992) 302. Others have posited that Josephus wrote either to catch the eye of the new rabbinic movement at Yavneh in Judaea or that he addressed 'the Roman government' on behalf of this movement (Smith [1956] 72). Though I have cited his comment about a Greek audience, Sterling (1992) 298–308 actually envisions Greek, Roman and Jewish audiences; cf. Feldman (1998) 132.

²⁶ E.g., White (1975) 299; Starr (1987) 213–23; Harris (1989) 222–9; Fantham (1996) 183–221; Potter (1999a) 23–44.

²⁷ The fact that Josephus occasionally explains Roman customs to his audience (*AJ* 18.195; 19.24) does not contradict the supposition of a primary Roman audience (*contra* Sterling [1992] 304 n. 369). Throughout the work he explains Judaean customs and frequently he speaks of the Greeks in the third person (e.g., *AJ* 1.38, 39, 73, 126, 129, 168, 284, 305; 15.371; 2.247; *Vit.* 12), even though he claims to write for the Greek world (1.5, 9). Just as we may not exclude Greeks or Judaeans from his hoped-for later audiences on the basis of his explanations of Greek and Judaean matters (*AJ* 1.128–9; 3.317; 14.1–3, 186–7; 16.175; 17.254; *Vit.* 1, 12), occasional remarks about Roman customs do not speak against a Roman audience.

²⁸ For Roman characterisations of Greeks, see Balsdon (1979) 30–54.

²⁹ Munn (2000) 315–23.

The Antiquitates Judaicae-Vita as a Work for the Roman Elite

The vague scholarly conception of Josephus' Greek audience has generated a strong predisposition to overlook Latin models in favour of Greek precedents, especially the tragedians, Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Strabo and Nicolaus of Damascus.³⁰ This is more understandable at the level of phrasing, since Josephus writes Greek, than it is with respect to conceptual paradigms and historiography. Admittedly, Josephus' lone reference to a Latin author, 'Titus Livius, the author of the Roman history' (Τίτος Λίβιος ὁ τῆς Ῥωμαικῆς ἱστορίας συγγραφεύς, *AJ* 14.68), may be explained away as the vestige of a Greek source. Not so easy to ignore, however, is his apparent use of more recent Latin historians for the extended narrative concerning Gaius and Claudius, which includes mention of Cluvius Rufus (*AJ* 19.91–2). Wiseman, who has worked closely on this section, is confident that Josephus knew three Flavian-era Latin histories, using two of them as his main sources;³¹ also, that his Greek echoes the Latin in places.³² Note further Josephus' informed if brief observations on the various histories of Nero's principate (*AJ* 20.154–7) and of the recent civil war (*BJ* 4.496: 'Ελλήνων τε καὶ Ῥωμαίων, 'both Greek and Roman') that were circulating in Rome.³³ The simplest explanation of these references is that Josephus knew some Latin histories at first hand.

Whether he was reading Latin or not, the *Antiquitates Judaicae-Vita*

³⁰ See, for example, Thackeray (1929) 100–24 (who attributes occasional reminiscences of Latin texts to Josephus' assistants: pp. 118–19); Shutt (1961) 59–109; Feldman (1984) 821, 836; Ladouceur (1993) 18–38; Mader (2000) 1–18.

³¹ Wiseman proposes Cluvius Rufus and Fabius Rusticus. For a history of the discussion by the pre-eminent Josephus scholar of our time who, however, doubted that Cluvius Rufus was Josephus' source and minimised his use of Latin material, see Feldman (1965) 212–13; Feldman (1984) 821, 836; in his most recent work (e.g., Feldman [1998] 269 n. 105), he appears more open to potential Latin influences.

³² Wiseman (1991) xii–xiv. My recent edition of Josephus' *Vita* (Mason 2001: translation and commentary) identifies a large number of Josephan phrases that suggest Latin equivalents or in some cases transliterate Latin terms, e.g., 4 n. 8, 7 n. 20, 9 n. 34, 12 n. 52, 22 n. 96, 31 n. 143, 37 n. 181, 38 n. 188, 40 n. 203, 52 n. 292, 61 n. 376, 64 n. 412, 76 n. 555, 78 n. 578, 106 n. 952, 107 n. 953, 109 n. 984.

³³ His description of pro-Roman accounts of the Judean war (*BJ* 1.2–3, 6–9), to which his *War* responds, may also be relevant. The fact that he goes on to censure 'Greeks' for *not* deigning to write contemporary history (1.13–14) suggests that these histories are in Latin.

assumes concepts, images and values that would have suited a Roman audience particularly well.

Structure

Because little research has been done on the structure of the *Antiquitates Judaicae*,³⁴ and yet we need a picture of the whole as a basis for analysis, I offer my overview here. My captions are unavoidably tendentious, but I hope to show their value in what follows.

Prologue (1.1–26)

PART I: First Temple (*Ant.* 1–10)

A. The Lawgiver's Establishment of the Constitution (1–4)

Antecedents: Creation to the deaths of Isaac and Rebecca; Abraham the first convert (vol. 1)—in Mesopotamia

Antecedents: Jacob and Esau to the Exodus (vol. 2)

The Judaean constitution: summary of priestly laws (vol. 3)

Forty years in desert, rebellion to the death of Moses; summary of the law *as* constitution (vol. 4)

B. First Phase: senate, kings and high priests of Eli's descent (5–8)

Conquest of Canaan under Joshua (vol. 5)

Conflicts with Philistines under Samuel and Saul (vol. 6)

Zenith of the first monarchy: the reign of David (vol. 7)

The reign of Solomon and division of the kingdom (vol. 8)

C. Second Phase: decline through corruption of the constitution (9–10)

Problems with neighbours to the fall of the Northern Kingdom (vol. 9)

CENTRAL PANEL: Fall of the first Temple; the priest-prophet Jeremiah and prophet Daniel assert the Judaean God's control of affairs and predict the Roman era; decisive proof of the Judaean code's effectiveness

PART II: Second Temple (*Ant.* 11–20)

A. Re-establishment of the aristocracy through the glorious Hasmonean house; its decline (11–13)

Return of Jews under Cyrus to Alexander the Great (vol. 11)

³⁴ Elementary structural observations are made by Attridge (1984) 211–13, who finds little that unifies the latter half of the work. Bilde (1988) 89–91 goes further, breaking down the two halves according to a narrative rationale. For what follows, see Mason (2000) xx–xxii. We are still in the beginning stages of such literary study.

Successful interaction with the Ptolemaic world from the death of Alexander; translation of the LXX; Tobiad story; the Hasmonean revolt (vol. 12)
 Zenith of the Hasmonean dynasty with John Hyrcanus; monarchy and decline to the death of Alexandra Salome (vol. 13)

B. Monarchy writ large: Herod (14–17)

The end of the Hasmoneans; Roman intervention in Judaea; Herod's rise to power; benefits to the Judaeans (vol. 14)

Herod's conquest of Jerusalem; building projects and dedication of Temple (vol. 15)

Herod at the peak of his power; his domestic conflicts (vol. 16)

The end of Herod's life; his son Archelaus (vol. 17)

C. World-wide effectiveness of the Judaeian constitution (18–20)

Judaea becomes a province; Judaeans in Rome; Roman rule to Agrippa I; Herod's descendants; Gaius' plan fails and he is punished; Asinaeus and Anilaus in Babylonia (vol. 18)

Detailed description of Gaius' punishment; promotion of Claudius; career of Agrippa I; the Roman constitutional crisis; Judaeans in Alexandria (vol. 19)

From the death of Agrippa I to the eve of the revolt; the conversion of Adiabene's royal house; causes of the revolt; concluding remarks (vol. 20)

Epilogue (20.259–68)

This concentric scheme isolates the theme of 'constitution' (πολιτεία) as a unifying concern of the *Antiquitates Judaicae* (and *Vita*).³⁵ Against the background of the rise and fall of Jerusalem's two temples, which formed the base of the priestly aristocracy, Josephus charts the development of the Judaeian system of government. He (more or less) opens and closes the lengthy narrative with stories of important persons, Abraham (*AJ* 1.148–256) and the royalty of Adiabene (20.17–96), who forsook their native Eastern traditions in order to live by the Judaeian constitution. This structure also exposes Josephus' highly editorialised presentation of the Roman constitutional crises that accompanied the accessions of Gaius and Claudius (*AJ* 18.205–309;

³⁵ The more important discussions of constitutional language in the *Antiquitates Judaicae* are Attridge (1976) 62–6; Schwartz (1983–84); Feldman (1998) 144–8. None of these deals, however, with the centrality of this theme or its significance for a Roman audience.

19.1–273), as a counterpart to his articulation of Moses' peerless constitution (3.84, 213, 322).

The Historiography of the Antiquitates Judaicae: Roman Resonances

Before turning to the specific issue of constitutions, we observe that the *Antiquitates Judaicae* embodies what are often considered distinctive traits of Roman historiography.³⁶ Namely, it is a character-driven history, a story of *exempla* that invites the author's and audience's moral-rhetorical evaluation of each individual as a guide for present conduct. Already in his *Bellum Judaicum*, Josephus was conscious of exceeding the proper limits of personal involvement with his subject (*Bj* 1.9–11; 5.19–20)—an authorial engagement that has been characterised as the central innovation of Latin literature.³⁷ In the *Antiquitates Judaicae* he continues a thoroughly personal and partisan moral assessment. His own life story caps off the narrative with a detailed demonstration of his aristocratic character (*Vit.* 430).

In Rome, this moral, introspective development had something to do with the self-understanding of the elite and something to do with the confluence of rhetoric and historiography, at least from Cicero onward. Whereas it appears that Greek handbooks did not include prescriptions for history (Cic. *De Or.* 2.61), in Rome historiography was married with the rhetorical project, especially epideictic.³⁸ Rhetoricians were concerned with arguing 'character' (ἦθος, *ingenium*, *mores*),³⁹ and that became a leading function of Roman history-writing. Even though history remained a separate discipline from oratory *sensu stricto*,⁴⁰ it had been brought under the umbrella of rhetoric and was now subject to rhetorical analysis (Cic. *De Or.* 2.35–36; cf. *Leg.* 1.1–5; Quint. *Inst.* 2.4.3; 9.4.18, 129; 10.101–4). One sees the more explicit

³⁶ See Mellor (1993) 47–67 (on Tacitus); Cape (1997) 217; Mellor (1999) 10–11, 44, 51; Potter (1999a) 67, 130–51; Kraus and Woodman (1997) 11 (on Sallust), 55–6 (on Livy).

³⁷ So Otis (1967) 198–203. Compare Josephus on Jerusalem with the description by Otis (1967) 198 of his Roman counterparts: 'They see Rome . . . as a moral *persona*, a social persona of which they are a part and to which therefore they have introspective access'.

³⁸ Woodman (1988) 70–116 is fundamental.

³⁹ On the distinctively Roman interest in the rhetoric of character, see May 1988: 6–8; Kennedy (1994) 102–58.

⁴⁰ So Potter (1999a) 135–8.

moralising on the biographical level in Cicero's surveys of Rome's constitution and laws (*De Republica*, *De Legibus*), in Sallust (*Cat.* 5.1–8; 14.1–6; *Iug.* 95.3–4), Livy (1 *praef.* 10) and Tacitus (e.g., *Hist.* 1.6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 22, 23).

Somewhat like Livy (1 *praef.* 9–12), Josephus announces the moral 'lesson' (τὸ σύνολον, *AJ* 1.14; τὸ παιδεύμα, 1.21) of his work in the prologue, namely: all those who follow the divinely originated laws of the constitution and imitate the Creator's virtues find 'happiness' (εὐδαιμονία), while those who do not suffer inevitable misfortune (*AJ* 1.14, 20). This is apparently more sanguine than the standard Roman portrait of steady moral decline (Sall. *Cat.* 5.9–13.5; Cic. *Div.* 2.2.4; Hor. *Carm.* 3.6; Livy 1 *praef.* 6–9; Catull. 64; Juv. *Sat.* 3.268–314); yet it is based on the shared premise that the character of key individuals determines the condition of the state.

In keeping with his moral quest, Josephus tells the story of Judaeon history through the lives of great individuals.⁴¹ He does not describe 'the period of the monarchy' but rather the characters of Saul, David and their successors (*AJ* 6–7); not 'Babylonian affairs' but the moral behaviour of the brothers Anilaeus and Asinaeus, as well as the consequences of that behaviour (18.310–79). Routinely, he pauses at the end of a life to summarise its vices and virtues (e.g., *AJ* 1.256, 346; 2.198–204; 4.327–31; 5.117–18, 253; 6.292–4; 7.37–8, 390–1). Near the end of King Saul's reign, for example, he halts the narrative in grand fashion:

τὸν δε πόλεσι καὶ δήμοις καὶ ἔθνεσι συμφέροντα λόγον καὶ προσήκοντα τοῖς ἀγαθοῦς, ὑφ' οὗ προαχθήσονται πάντες ἀρετὴν διώκειν καὶ ζηλοῦν τὰ δόξαν καὶ μνήμην αἰώνιον παρασχεῖν δυνησόμενα.

(Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 6.343)

Now I shall relate something beneficial to cities and peoples and nations alike—indeed important for good persons—by which everyone will be stimulated to pursue virtue and to desire those things that can produce glory and eternal renown.

Similarly, he relates the miserable death of Gaius *because* it will bring 'encouragement for those in sinking fortunes and a call to moderation for those who suppose that good fortune is forever—and not something that will turn out badly unless virtue is brought alongside'

⁴¹ Feldman (1998) 74–5.

(παραμυθίαν τοῖς ἐν τύχαις κειμένοις καὶ σωφρονισμόν τοῖς οἰομένοις αἰδίων τὴν εὐτυχίαν, ἀλλὰ μὴ ἐπιμεταφέρειν κακῶς ἀρετῆς αὐτῇ μὴ παραγενομένης, *AJ* 19.16).

Noteworthy in this context is Josephus' effort to achieve balance in his moral assessments and to render his characters plausible human beings with conflicting drives toward good and evil. Such a rounded psychological analysis, with its resulting ambiguities, was a hallmark of Roman historiography.⁴² Even when describing unrepentant villains, Josephus looks for intelligible motives. They are neither static nor two-dimensional representatives of particular virtues or vices. Samson was brave and Solomon wise, though both were vulnerable to women (*AJ* 5.317; 8.211). Saul, who lost divine favour through disobedience (*AJ* 6.166, 378), was nonetheless a paradigm of manliness (6.344–50). Although Josephus leaves no question of the fratricide Aristobulus' pride and guilt, he commends this king's temperament (*AJ* 13.318–19). Alexander Janneus, a brutal dictator, is to be understood in part as a victim of circumstances (*AJ* 13.380–3). His wife and successor Alexandra Salome, whom Josephus blames for the fall of the Hasmonean house, nevertheless 'kept the nation at peace' (ἐν εἰρήνῃ τὸ ἔθνος διεφύλαξεν, *AJ* 13.430–2). Josephus finds a way to say something positive even about the notorious *princeps* Gaius: he was highly educated and a superb orator (*AJ* 19.208–9).

This concern for rounded portraiture is most obvious in the case of King Herod. Whereas the *War* had offered unstinting praise, in keeping with its presentation of Herod as a faithful Roman ally, the *Antiquitates Judaicae* both praises his Saul-like embodiment of manly courage (*AJ* 14.430, 442–4, 462–3, 482–3; 15.121–54, 305) and excoriates his pride and transgression of the laws (14.403; 15.267–76; 16.1–4, 179–87; 17.151, 180–1), which propel him to a disastrous end (16.188–9, 395–404; 17.168–71). Throughout the narrative, Herod acts from the understandable human motives of anger and jealousy.

Also in its details Josephus' narrative evokes the standard accounts of ancient Roman lore. Both Romans and Judaeans originated in

⁴² Cf. Sallust's appreciative juxtaposition of the opposing views and temperaments of Caesar and Cato (Catull. 50–4) on which Kraus and Woodman (1999) 19; Livy's well-known effort to be even-handed both in portraying conflicting traditions and in presenting balanced characters (already Foster 1919), although he does not delve deeply into motives; Tacitus' masterful explorations of his subjects' individual motives (Syme [1958] 138–65; Mellor (1993) 68–86; also Plutarch's *De Vita Caesarum* with comparisons.

faraway places and conquered their future homelands with divine aid (Livy 1.1–3; *AJ* 5.1–79). Like Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Josephus obviates false rumors about the nation's origin (as if from wandering vagabonds or expelled lepers) with an accurate account (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.4.2; *AJ* 3.264–6; *Ap.* 1.279, 305–11). Judaeans and Romans have had to overcome Greek ignorance about their existence (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.89.1; *Ap.* 1.2–29). As newborn babies, both Romulus and Moses were the objects of a king's wrath, which led to their exposure in rivers (Livy 1.4.1–6; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.79.4–7; *AJ* 2.218–23). Both were rescued from the water, however, and raised by those who had no knowledge of their destinies (Livy 1.4.7–9; *AJ* 2.224–30). Both ended their lives by being enveloped in clouds (Livy 1.16.1; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.56.2; *AJ* 4.326).

Josephus' parallels with Dionysius are all the more significant when the latter distinguishes Roman from Greek ways. For example, Dionysius claims that rejection of unseemly fables was a distinctive trait of the Romans:

τοὺς δὲ παραδεδομένους περὶ αὐτῶν μύθους, ἐν οἷς βλασφημίαι τινὲς ἔνεισι κατ' αὐτῶν ἢ κακηγορίαι, πονηροῦς καὶ ἀνωφελεῖς καὶ ἀσχημονας ὑπολαβὼν εἶναι καὶ οὐκ ὅτι θεῶν ἀλλὰ οὐδ' ἀνθρώπων ἀγαθῶν ἀξίους ἅπαντας ἐξέβαλε.

(Dionysius Halicarnassensis, *Antiquitates Romanae* 2.18.3)

All the traditional fables [μύθοι] concerning them [the Gods], in which there are some insults against them or accusations, Romulus rejected; he regarded them as evil, pointless and indecent, as unworthy not only of the Gods but of good men.

Similarly, Josephus' prologue attacks 'other legislators' (ἄλλοι νομοθέται) for attributing human weaknesses to the Gods and, following these fables (μύθοι), for framing laws that excuse bad human behaviour (*AJ* 1.22). Moses, by first positing a worthy view of God as the perfection of virtue (*AJ* 1.15), created a moral basis for imitation (*AJ* 1.23). Both Dionysius (*Ant. Rom.* 2.20.1) and Josephus (*AJ* 1.24) admit that *some* fables may have redeeming allegorical uses.

Further, Dionysius has the Romans as a people reject the claims of some philosophers that the Gods do not intervene in human affairs (*Ant. Rom.* 2.68.2; 20.9). Josephus makes divine providence the *Leitmotif* of his history: in his case it is Daniel's predictions that demonstrate providence beyond all cavil and against the claims of the Epicureans (*AJ* 10.276–81).

Dionysius also argues that, unlike the Greeks, who tend to impose severe restrictions on citizenship and yet easily assimilate foreign cults, the Romans have a habit of extending citizenship to conquered nations through colonies, which then fall under Roman law (*Ant. Rom.* 2.16–17). Although they are hospitable to foreign cults, the Romans' dignity prevents them from adopting alien traditions as their own (*Ant. Rom.* 2.19). In his concluding work, similarly, Josephus will confirm that the Judaeans practice the ethnic 'separation' (ἄμιξία) for which they are famous (*Ap.* 2.258; cf. *AJ* 13.245), refusing to partake of others' customs. Yet they offer a warm welcome to those who wish to join them in observing their own laws (*Ap.* 2.261). The *Antiquitates Judaicae* itself provides a shining example, in the royal family of Adiabene, of foreign dignitaries embracing Judaeian culture (*AJ* 20.17–96).

These many parallels invite a closer contextual examination of the constitutional theme in Josephus' work.

The Judaeian and Roman Constitutions

Issues of government and constitution (πολιτεία, *res publica*) were ubiquitous in Greek and Roman authors (Hdt. 3.80–2; Pl. *Rep.* 8.543–9.576; Arist. *Pol.* 3.5.1–2 [1279a]). Polybius invites the reader to test (δοκιμάζειν) whether the Roman constitution is not the best (6.1.4–5). Rome's government is even better than the divine Spartan constitution (6.48.2), he proposes, because it balances all three types—monarchy, aristocracy and democracy—and so provides a safeguard against fluctuation from one type to another (6.18). Dionysius is fascinated by constitutions (πολιτεῖαι). He has Romulus establish the two orders of nobility (εὐπατρίδαι) and plebeians (*Ant. Rom.* 2.8), refine the crude Greek system of patronage so that it was based upon mutual affection (2.9.2–3), put the senate (γερονσία) in charge of all affairs—as priests, governors and magistrates—as a check on the king (2.9.1) and thus create a perfectly harmonious state (2.7.2). In a leisurely account of the conflict between the orders (e.g., *Ant. Rom.* 7.38–59), Dionysius reinforces the point that a unique balance of interests (7.50.2) makes the Roman constitution the best (τὸ σχῆμα τῆς πολιτείας κράτιστον, 7.56.3).

Among Roman authors, constitutional issues tended to be discussed not in terms of abstract analysis but from the perspective of

the Roman statesman's practical concern for his own government.⁴³ Tacitus' word plays with 'freedom' (*libertas*, *Agr.* 1–3) and 'slavery' or 'mastery' (*servitium*, *servitus*, e.g., *Hist.* 1.1, 4)—under Augustus we had 'peace and a *princeps*' (*pace et principe*, *Ann.* 3.28.1)⁴⁴—have to do with just such questions of the state's welfare. Most Roman historians displayed a senatorial-aristocratic interest,⁴⁵ even if they were not looking for a renewal of the republic.⁴⁶ Given Domitian's flaunting of his monarchical style—moving his court to Alba Longa, assuming the consulship ten times and the position of *censor perpetuus*, thus dispensing with even the most perfunctory symbols of co-operation with the *patres* ('fathers')⁴⁷—issues of governance must have been constantly on the minds of elite men in the capital.⁴⁸ Josephus was not part of the Roman elite, but he focussed the narrative of his country's government on just these issues.

His prologue declares his subject to be the 'ancient lore' (ἀρχαιολογία) and 'political constitution' (διάταξις τοῦ πολιτεύματος) of the Judaeans (*AJ* 1.5). He calls what Ptolemy II wanted a 'constitution' (πολιτεία, *AJ* 1.10); cf. πολίτευμα, 'body politic', 1.13). By asking the reader 'to assess' (δοκιμάζειν) the Judaeans lawgiver's work (*AJ* 1.15), he implicitly engages the audience in a Polybian sort of dialogue concerning the best constitution, though he will deal explicitly only with the vicissitudes of his own government. In confirmation of the theme's importance, he mentions it several times in his concluding remarks (*AJ* 20.229, 251, 261). Again, the final quarter of the sequel to the *Antiquitates Judaicae*, *Contra Apionem*, extols the Judaeans 'constitution' (πολιτεία) as the finest in the world (*Ap.* 2.188, 222, 226, 272–3). Near the end of that book, Josephus recalls that he wrote the *Antiquitates Judaicae* in order to give 'an exact account of our laws and constitution' (*Ap.* 2.287). In his view, then, his major work was about the Judaeans constitution.

After describing Judaeans origins, Josephus moves quickly to the constitution in volumes 3 and 4. Explicit constitutional language is

⁴³ Cf. Mellor (1993) 88–9 (on Tacitus); Kraus and Woodman (1997) 7; Potter (1999a) 52.

⁴⁴ Cf. Plass (1988) 3–68.

⁴⁵ Potter (1999a) 153–4.

⁴⁶ Syme (1958) 547–65; 1970: 10.

⁴⁷ Jones (1992) 23–30.

⁴⁸ On the more general climate at the end of the first century, see Syme (1970) 118–40.

present throughout this section (*AJ* 3.84, 213; 4.45, 184, 191, 193–5, 196–8, 302, 310, 312). The terms of the constitution provide the criterion against which characters will be judged in the balance of the work (e.g., *AJ* 5.98, 179; 15.254, 281; 18.9).

Josephus' portrait of the Judaeian constitution emphasises characteristically Roman virtues: dignity, austerity, severity, simplicity, justice, moderation, restraint—the attributes of Cato the Elder, which one frequently encounters as the 'old ways' (cf. Polyb. 6.7.5–8, 48.3, 56.1–5; Sall. *Cat.* 11–13; Cic. *Rep.* 1.27–8; Livy 1 *praef.* 10–12; Tac. *Hist.* 1.14; Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 1.3–4; 2.1, 3). Livy, famously, blames the present moral turpitude on the loss of traditional *disciplina* (Livy 1 *praef.* 9), and it is that Sabine virtue of 'stern and austere discipline' (*disciplina tetrica ac tristi*), unaffected by foreign mores, that made Numa such a noble spirit (1.18.4). In contrast to 'the lax customs of the Greeks' (τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς ἥθεσι τοῖς ἐκλελυμένοις, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.27.1; cf. 2.24.2–6), according to Dionysius, Romulus' laws instilled 'discipline' (εὐκοσμία): they were 'severe and intolerant of vice' (ἀύστηρά καὶ μισοπονηρός, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.24.1).

Dionysius illustrates Roman discipline through the power granted the *paterfamilias* to keep women and children in line: whereas the Greeks would disregard a woman's drunkenness, Romulus permitted husbands to punish this and also its consequence, adultery, with death (*Ant. Rom.* 2.25.7). Again, whereas Greek constitutions placed children in their parents' charge for only a brief time and prescribed mild punishments for disrespectful youth, Romulus recognised that such indulgence was dangerous. He gave more or less complete power to fathers, throughout the father's lifetime, extending as far as corporal and capital punishment or sale into slavery (*Ant. Rom.* 2.26). In the context of widely perceived social deterioration, many Roman audiences evidently welcomed an ideal of judicial severity.

We can tell that Josephus prizes the severity of Judaeian justice from his comparative remarks in the *Contra Apionem*: because most legislators have left so many loopholes, such as the mere payment of fines for adultery, violation of the laws has in other nations become an art (*Ap.* 2.276). The Judaeians, however, are afraid to transgress their laws, in the certain knowledge of full retribution. This observation fits with Josephus' statement in *Antiquitates Judaicae*'s prologue on the bad behaviour encouraged by other legislators through their adoption of myths (*AJ* 1.22). Similarly, in his précis of the Judaeian constitution, he stresses the severity of the punishment for adultery

(death: *AJ* 4.244–53) and also the parents' autonomy over their young: they may execute persistently rebellious children (*AJ* 4.260–4). Josephus thus meets the desire of his Roman audience for a judicial system that is tougher on crime and disorder. To be sure, he also emphasises the fairness and due process of the laws (e.g., *AJ* 4.218–41), without contradicting the principle of severe punishment for crimes committed.

As for the form of government advocated in the Judaeian constitution, Josephus is clear: it is a senatorial aristocracy. He has Moses caution the people that 'aristocracy, and the life associated with it, is the noblest. So do not let the desire for any other constitution snare you' (*AJ* 4.223). This aristocracy places a 'senate' (γερουσία) alongside the high priest (*AJ* 4.186, 218, 220, 255, 256, 325), perhaps thus achieving the balance prized by Polybius, Cicero and Dionysius. Josephus edits the biblical narrative to make Moses' great successor Joshua consult the senate several times (*AJ* 5.15, 43, 55). This retrojection of senates into the nation's early history is closely paralleled in the Roman annalists and the later historians who have Romulus establish a senate (Livy 1.8.7; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.14).⁴⁹ Josephus employs the same three Greek words (γερουσία, συνέδριον, βουλή)⁵⁰ for the senate that Dionysius uses interchangeably (*Ant. Rom.* 2.14). Reinterpreting the cycles of sin and repentance in Judges, he adopts the deterioration scheme familiar from Roman authors: 'the aristocracy was already falling into corruption: no longer did they appoint the senates or any of the other the leadership formerly legislated' (καὶ συνέβαινεν ἤδη τὴν ἀριστοκρατίαν διεφθάρθαι, καὶ τὰς γερουσίας οὐκ ἀπεδείκνυσαν οὐδ' ἀρχὴν οὐδεμίαν τῶν πρότερον νενομισμένων, *AJ* 5.135). This failure results in civil war.

An obvious point of comparison between the Judaeian and Roman constitutions is that both inextricably weave matters of state with piety and priesthood. Even though he has Romulus consecrate the first temple in Rome (Livy 1.10.6–7), Livy credits Numa with installing the basic instruments of national piety and the priesthoods (1.20). He then uses Romulus and Numa, yin-yang-like, to measure the bal-

⁴⁹ Cf. Potter (1999a) 153–4.

⁵⁰ γερουσία: see the references in the main text; βουλή (though ordinarily used of the Roman senate or other city councils): *AJ* 20.11; *Vit.* 204; συνέδριον: *AJ* 14.91, 167, 168, 10, 171, 175, 177–80; 15.4; 20.200; *Vit.* 62; τὸ κοινόν: *AJ* 6.17; 13.366; *Vit.* 65, 72, 190). Cf. Mason (1996) 187–228.

anced character of future kings (1.32.4). Livy and Dionysius agree that the Romans are unique in the degree to which they subject all other concerns to piety (Livy 1.21.1; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.19.2–3). This balance is perfectly matched by Josephus, who introduces the first high priest Aaron, brother of Moses (*AJ* 3.188), as the one to whose descendants the constitution would be entrusted for accurate preservation in perpetuity (*AJ* 4.304; *Ap.* 1.29–37; 2.184–6). And Josephus claims that the Judaeans excel other nations in placing piety above all other virtues (*Ap.* 2.164–71). Josephus realises the Roman dream of a perfect marriage between priesthood and aristocracy (e.g., Cic. *Dom.* 1.1),⁵¹ for in his constitution the aristocrats are by definition the hereditary priesthood (*Vit.* 1).

Perhaps the most telling intersection between Josephus' portrait of the Judaeian constitution and Roman elite values lies in his pointed anti-monarchical bias. After the death of Romulus, although the senators tried to maintain government by themselves, the people insisted upon a new king—in fond remembrance of Romulus (Cic. *Rep.* 2.12.23) and 'having not yet enjoyed the sweetness of liberty' (*libertatis dulcedine nondum experta*; Livy 1.17.3). In Josephus, the reckless behaviour of the prophet Samuel's sons creates a popular demand for kingship. But Samuel is profoundly upset at this 'because of his innate justice and his hatred of kings, for he had enormous affection for aristocracy, as divine and making happy those who use this constitution' (διὰ τὴν σύμφυτον δικαιοσύνην καὶ τὸ πρὸς βασιλέας μῖσος· ἥττητο γὰρ δεινῶς τῆς ἀριστοκρατίας ὡς θείας καὶ μακαρίου ποιούσης τοὺς χρωμένους αὐτῇ τῇ πολιτείᾳ, *AJ* 6.36). Sure enough, once the kingship is in place it proves ruinous, until it is finally taken away with the Babylonian captivity (*AJ* 10.143–4).

When the Judaeans return from captivity, they revert to their ideal constitution and once again live under 'an aristocratic constitution, with the rule of the few' (πολιτεία . . . ἀριστοκρατικῇ, μετ' ὀλιγαρχίας, *AJ* 11.111).⁵² A letter to the Judaeans from Antiochus III identifies

⁵¹ On Augustus' programme to revive religion, see Syme (1958) 446–60; for Domitian's (consciously similar in many ways), see Jones (1992) 99–106.

⁵² The summary in *Ant.* 20.234 will describe this same period as one of democracy. Some scholars trace this contradiction to a difference of sources (Attridge [1984] 227 n. 66). Yet these descriptive terms are fluid. Polybius claims that the Roman government could be described with equal justice as a monarchy, aristocracy or democracy depending upon one's focus (6.11.12). Josephus can describe the period of the Judges as both monarchy (*AJ* 6.85; 20.229) and aristocracy (11.112).

the senate as their governing body (*AJ* 12.138, 142) and the Hasmonean Jonathan writes on behalf of 'the senate and the body of priests' (*AJ* 13.166, 169). The early Hasmoneans up until John Hyrcanus, whom Josephus reveres, continue this form of government. But then with Aristobulus come both the 'transformation of rule into monarchy' (τὴν ἀρχὴν εἰς βασιλείαν μεταθεῖναι) and the rapid decline of the great house (*AJ* 13.300–1). The Judean people, as Pompey is hearing the rivals Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II make their cases for the throne, 'requested not to be subject to a king, for it was traditional to obey the priests of the God honoured among them. But these men, though descendants of priests, sought to lead the nation into another kind of government, to enslave it' (τὸ μὲν οὐκ ἀξιούν βασιλεύεσθαι· πάτριον γὰρ εἶναι τοῖς ἱερεῦσι τοῦ τιμωμένου παρ' αὐτοῖς θεοῦ πειθαρχεῖν, ὄντας δὲ τούτους ἀπογόνους τῶν ἱερέων εἰς ἄλλην μετάγειν ἀρχὴν τὸ ἔθνος ζητῆσαι, *AJ* 14.41). The notion that allegiance to one man amounts to slavery is famously shared by Tacitus (e.g., *Agr.* 2.3).

After the Hasmonean house eventually fell, Josephus asserts, the Roman Gabinius removed monarchical rule and once again aristocracy was restored (*AJ* 14.91). That proper state of affairs has been the norm until Josephus' own time. The exceptions to it, especially with the long-ruling monarch Herod (37–34 BCE), were regrettable. If the Judeans were going to have a king, Moses had mandated that it be one of their own people (*AJ* 4.223). Herod, however, was a 'Hemi-Ioudaios' (*AJ* 14.403).⁵³ This matches Livy's observation that Tarquinius the Corinthian and his son Superbus were considered illegitimate because they were not even Italian, much less Roman (Livy 1.40.2). Josephus' portraits of Herod, Herod's descendants and also the Roman ruler Gaius serve as notorious examples of what happens when political constitutions are corrupted.

Elsewhere he presents the very leaders of the priestly-aristocratic system as fervently committed to 'democracy', by which he apparently means 'justice for the people' or the like, not something like Athenian government (*BJ* 4.319, 358). His broad summary characterisation of the early post-exilic period as democratic, in the positive sense that it was good for the people—before the rise of the late Hasmonean monarchy—seems to be only a different perspective on the period that he elsewhere labels aristocracy. It is perhaps in the vein of Tacitus' sharp contrast between slavery (that is, the principate in most instances) and 'liberty' (that is, senatorial control): *Agr.* 2–3.

⁵³ On Herod's actual status as a Judean, see Richardson (1996) 52–80.

The standard language for the corruption of monarchy is of course 'tyranny' (τυραννίς, *tyrannis*). In Herodotus' succinct definition, even the very best of men, if given absolute rule, will become a tyrant who 'skews the traditional laws, violates women, and executes without trial' (νόμοιιά τε κινέει πάτρια καὶ βιάται γυναῖκας κτείνει τε ἀκρίτους, 3.80). Similarly Plato, Aristotle, Polybius and Dionysius view tyranny as the almost inevitable degenerate form of monarchy (Pl. *Resp.* 8.565–9; Arist. *Pol.* 3.5.4 [1279b]; 4.8 [1295a]; Polyb. 6.4.8; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 7.55.3). Livy uses the *tyrann*-group often, beginning with King Amulius, who had seized power and tried to rob his brother of heirs (Livy 1.6.1). Although Tacitus employs these words very sparingly, preferring to evoke the corruption of power by other terms,⁵⁴ he obliquely calls Tiberius a tyrant (*Ann.* 6.6). Brooks Otis remarks: 'All we can be really sure of is that Tacitus' theme is tyranny—its progressive deterioration and its ultimate crisis'.⁵⁵

Josephus is not nearly as subtle as Tacitus. He uses the term τύραννος ('tyrant') five times already in the prologue to the *War*, where it refers to the Judean rebel leaders, who pursue personal power at all costs (*Bj* 1.10–11, 24, 27–8). Josephus continues to use the label freely throughout the *War*. Note *Bj* 4.208, where he describes one of the rebels, John of Gischala, in language that recalls the Catiline of Sallust's narrative: 'He was a most cunning man, who carried about a terrible passion for tyranny and who had been plotting for a long time against the state' (δολιώτατος ἀνὴρ καὶ δεινὸν ἔρωτα τυραννίδος ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ περιφέρων, ὃς πόρρωθεν ἐπεβούλενε τοῖς πράγμασιν, *Bj* 4.208; cf. Sall., *Cat.* 5.4–6: *animus audax, subdolus*. . . . *Hunc . . . lubido maxima invaserat rei publicae capiundae*, 'A bold spirit, rather cunning. . . . An enormous passion had taken over this man to control the state').⁵⁶

In keeping with its broader theme, the *Antiquitates Judaicae-Vita* uses the *tyrann*-group extensively: of Judean, Roman and other leaders. Nimrod, whose overweening arrogance inspired him to construct a flood-proof tower so as not to be subject to divine direction, was the first tyrant (*Aj* 1.114). In the period of the Judges King Abimelech 'transformed the state into a tyranny, making himself a master who

⁵⁴ For a nuanced treatment see Syme (1958) 408–34; cf. Mellor (1993) 87–112.

⁵⁵ Otis (1967) 199.

⁵⁶ Cf. Thackeray (1929) 119–20, who also notes the striking parallel between *Bj* 2.585 (on John's poverty as a goad) and Sall. *Cat.* 5.7.

did whatever he wanted in spite of the laws' (εἰς τυραννίδα τὰ πράγματα μεθίστησι, κύριον αὐτὸν ὃ τι βούλεται ποιεῖν ἀντὶ τῶν νομίμων, *AJ* 5.234). Whereas 1 Samuel 2:12–17 had accused the sons of the high priest Eli only of cultic crimes and promiscuity with the women temple attendants, Josephus describes them as men who robbed others and violated women in general: 'their way of life was no different from tyranny' (τυραννίδος δ' οὐθὲν ἀπέλειπεν ὁ βίος αὐτῶν, *AJ* 5.339). It is no great surprise that both Moses and Josephus are accused by their disaffected rivals of being tyrants: from the perspective of the supportive audience, of course, the accusations are ironic (*AJ* 4.16, 22, 146–9; *Vit.* 260, 302).⁵⁷

The other salient aspect of Josephus' portrait of the Judaeen constitution is the 'succession' (διαδοχή) motif. Notwithstanding the Bible's omission of such language, Josephus indicates throughout his narrative who succeeded whom in the high-priestly headship of the Judaeen senate, the perpetual guardian of Moses' constitution. He also pauses half-way through the work and again in the closing paragraphs to present summary 'succession' lists (*AJ* 10.151–3; 20.224–51). He opens his autobiographical appendix by showing his own place in the 'succession' (*Vit.* 3) and then in the sequel celebrates the accurate preservation of the constitution through two thousand years of high-priestly succession (*Ap.* 1.36). To be sure, this ideal portrait is balanced by occasional notices about the interference of rulers, such as the kings Antiochus IV (*AJ* 12.238) and Herod the Great (*AJ* 15.40–1; 20.247), the latter's descendants (*AJ* 20.103, 203) and the Judaeen tyrants (*BJ* 4.151–61) in the high-priestly succession. But these concessions to real life do not prevent him from maintaining the soundness of the historic legacy.

Josephus' interest in monarchical succession is particularly illuminating for our question. That it matters to him is confirmed by his summary remark at *AJ* 20.261, that he has been careful to present 'the succession as well as the conduct of the kings' (τὴν περὶ τοὺς βασιλεῖς διαδοχὴν τε καὶ ἀγωγὴν). Because the indigenous form of government is aristocracy, however, the royal succession lists are fragmentary, unlike the continuous high-priestly succession. They also

⁵⁷ It strains belief, that is to say, that in the case of Josephus he accidentally lets slip a genuine charge against him, which can then become the bedrock of scholarly reconstruction of his career; *contra* Luther (1910) 7; Laqueur (1920) 108; Shutt (1961) 6.

tend to highlight the problem of royal succession: the lengths to which monarchs must go to choose their heirs. These problems begin with David, whose son Adonijah plots unsuccessfully to succeed him (*AJ* 8.345, 354–62), and continue with Solomon, whose successor immediately forfeits the bulk of his kingdom to a contender through his oppressive measures (*AJ* 8.212–21). Thematising the issue of problematic succession, Josephus reworks the Bible to say that a childless and gravely ill King Hezekiah aggravated his condition with the worry that ‘he was about to die, having left his house and rule devoid of a legitimate succession’ (μέλλοι τελευτᾶν ἔρημον καταλιπὼν τὸν οἶκον καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν γνησίας διαδοχῆς, *AJ* 10.25). Again, he embellishes Daniel’s vision of the future to point out that the royal successors of Alexander, ‘were neither his sons nor yet his relatives’ (οὔτε δὲ παῖδας αὐτοῦ τούτους ὄντας οὔτε συγγενεῖς, *AJ* 10.274).

Josephus’ concern with legitimate monarchical succession is paralleled in Roman authors. Early in the *Historiae*, Tacitus has the elderly *princeps* Galba, who becomes worried about his succession as soon as he takes power, adopt Licinianus Piso (*Hist.* 1.13–16): he does so with a speech that explicitly recalls Augustus’ programmatic difficulty in finding an heir (*Hist.* 1.15). Although Galba favours adoption as the safest means of succession, the whole passage points up a basic flaw in concentrating power in one man: Given the certainty of the autocrat’s death, what shall we do for an *encore*? Josephus’ treatment of the theme comes to a head with Augustus’ contemporary King Herod, whose story accounts for more than one quarter of the 121 occurrences of ‘successor’ (διάδοχος) and ‘succession’ (διαδοχή) in this corpus. Herod’s succession story is also the critical context for interpreting the Roman constitutional crisis.

The Roman Constitutional Crisis

Virtually every commentator has taken Josephus’ lengthy description of events in Rome between Tiberius’ final days and Claudius’ accession as an innocent by-product of some interest other than Roman affairs: Josephus wanted to pad his narrative so as to reach twenty volumes in imitation of Dionysius’ *Antiquitates Romanae*,⁵⁸ he had intrinsically interesting sources, which broadly supported his theme of divine

⁵⁸ Thackeray (1967) 56.

providence;⁵⁹ and/or he mainly wanted to aggrandise Agrippa I, who happened to have been closely involved in Claudius' accession.⁶⁰ If Josephus included vastly more Roman material than seems necessary, that was only typical of his carelessness and lack of proportion. So the standard views.

Whereas for the rest of the *Antiquitates Judaicae* I have tried to bring out a Rome-relevant subtext, in the case of the Roman material I must, paradoxically, try to show that it is fully a part of Josephus' narrative. I submit that he diverts his Judaeian history to Rome for a compelling reason, beyond the rhetorical need for variety of scene. He has a sustained interest in using Roman political crises to illustrate his overriding constitutional themes for a Roman audience. This motive becomes clear when we consider the context of the Roman material, the role of the 'succession' motif in it, and the case for aristocracy made here.

In context, the story of Rome's constitutional woes is organically connected with everything that goes before: most immediately the story of Agrippa I in Rome, but also the preceding four volumes, which deal with the most famous Judaeian monarch: Herod. We considered above the importance of the 'tyranny' theme in Josephus. Notice now the play between kingship and tyranny in the case of Herod and his son Archelaus. Before Herod becomes king, the Judaeian aristocrats, here 'the principal men' (οἱ πρῶτοι), discern that he really wishes to become a tyrant (*AJ* 14.165). Once he becomes king, indeed, he is denounced first by the Gadarenes (*AJ* 15.354) and then by the Judaeians (16.4) as a tyrant. After his death, creating an *inclusio*, the Judaeian 'elders' (πρέσβεις) recall that he made the kingship into a tyranny (*AJ* 17.304). Naturally, his son Archelaus also desired the title of king only in order that he might behave with savagery, as a tyrant (*AJ* 17.237); he was later removed on precisely that charge (17.342). Just as Cicero had observed that Tarquinius 'made the title of king odious to our people' (*nomen huic populo in odium uenisse regium*, *Rep.* 1.40.62; cf. 2.30.52), in Josephus Herod is the embodiment of monarchy-cum-tyranny, the very 'model of oppression' (παράδειγμα κακώσεως, *AJ* 17.310). And his story prefaces that of the Roman rulers.

⁵⁹ Wiseman (1991) xii.

⁶⁰ Feldman (1965) 213 n. a.

Herod's tyrannical actions included all the standard items: self-exaltation above the nation's laws, capricious handling of justice, wanton corruption of women, and—in close agreement with Livy's portrait of Tarquinius Superbus (Livy 1.49.2)—execution of the nobility (εὐπατρίδαι, 'nobles') among the Judaeen senators (*AJ* 17.307–10; cf. 14.175; 15.3–4). Herod would kill nobles on absurd pretexts, according to the Judaeen leaders quoted here, and if he let them live he would seize their property (χρήματα) for himself. Also like the tyrannical Tarquinius, when Herod encountered hostility among his subjects (in Jerusalem), he directed his largesse toward foreign cities (Livy 1.49.8–9; *AJ* 15.326–30; 16.146–490).

Now this word εὐπατρίδης, which Dionysius applies to the senatorial class in his explication of the Roman constitution (*Ant. Rom.* 2.7.1–2) occurs only six times in the *Antiquitates Iudaicae*. In all of the other five cases it refers to the Roman nobles victimised by Tiberius and Gaius. Josephus' obituary on Tiberius notes that he had wronged these nobles (εὐπατρίδαι) more than any other man, sentencing them to death at his personal whim (*AJ* 18.226). Gaius is introduced in volume 19 in much the same way: he harassed 'in particular the senate, and among this group the nobles, and any who enjoyed distinction because of honourable ancestry' (καὶ μάλιστα τὴν σύγκλητον καὶ ὅποσοι τούτων εὐπατρίδαι καὶ προγόνων ἐπιφαινείους τιμώμενοι, *AJ* 19.2; cf. 75, 132, 136). Moreover, Gaius attacked the equestrian order because it was the base of the future senate, killing or expelling the knights and confiscating their 'property' (χρήματα). We need hardly stress that in the mid-90s CE, when Josephus published his work, Domitian himself was notorious for using informants to secure convictions in order to confiscate property (Suet. *Dom.* 12.1–2; Cass. Dio 68.1.1–2). Thus, Josephus has apparently written of Herod with the Roman monarchs in mind and vice versa; and the contemporary application seems obvious.

This organic connection is abundantly confirmed by Josephus' portrayal of the Roman *principes* as Herod-like 'tyrants' (τύραννοι). He affects not to know whether to call Tiberius a king or a tyrant (*AJ* 18.169), but Gaius receives the label 'tyrant' more than a dozen times (e.g., *AJ* 19.18, 79, 133, 135, 155). An ample editorial justifies this language with the claim that the ruler brooked no opposition to his fancies and took sexual deviance as far as incest (19.201–11).

Most interesting for our purposes are the passages in which Josephus reduces *all* the Roman *principes* to the status of tyrants. One of these

is an editorial remark to the effect that, before Rome had 'fallen under tyranny' (τυραννηθῆναι), the senate had commanded her armies (*AJ* 19.187). The other is more deliberate: after Gaius' death, the senators admonish a frightened Claudius to yield to them, 'leaving to the *law* provision for the good order of the *res publica*, remembering what evil the city had suffered from the earlier tyrants (οἱ πρότεροι τύραννοι) and how he had been imperilled along with them under Gaius' (καὶ τῷ νόμῳ παραχωροῦντα τοῦ ἐπὶ τοῖς κοινοῖς κόσμου τὴν πρόνοιαν, μνημονεύοντα ὧν οἱ πρότεροι τύραννοι κακώσκειαν τὴν πόλιν καὶ ὧν ὑπὸ Γαίου καὶ αὐτὸς κινδυνεύσειεν σὺν αὐτοῖς, *AJ* 19.230). It seems that Josephus, like Aristotle, Polybius and Tacitus, views tyranny as the almost inevitable concomitant of monarchy, therefore to be expected in all Roman autocrats.

Like every tyrant and Roman *princeps*, Josephus' Herod faced the fundamental problem of succession, even though he had many sons. One of the more prominent threads in Josephus' Herod story is the king's difficulty in naming an heir from among his tyrannical offspring: intrigues and murders abound (e.g., *AJ* 16.133–5; 17.52–3, 146–8). After his death, with a glorious irony for his Roman audience, Herod's succession problem is referred to Augustus in Rome (*AJ* 17.304–20), the *princeps* whose own succession problems had meanwhile become legendary.⁶¹

Given this context and Josephus' demonstrable interest in succession, it can hardly be mere coincidence that he opens the story of Rome's crisis with a comical sketch of Tiberius' succession woes as the monarch's death approaches (*AJ* 18.205–27). In this version,⁶² Tiberius very much wants his own grandson Gemellus to succeed him, but feels that he must leave such an important decision to the gods (*AJ* 18.211)—no doubt an allusion to his superstitious nature. And yet he does not quite trust the gods either. So he first establishes a criterion of divine favour, committing himself to make an heir of the first young man to greet him on the next morning, but then tries to bias the die by instructing Gemellus' tutor to bring the preferred candidate at sunrise (*AJ* 18.212). To his great distress, however, Gaius turns out to be the one who first greets him the next day and so necessarily receives the inheritance of *imperium*. Tiberius

⁶¹ The classic study is Syme (1939) 418–39.

⁶² Contrast the details in Suet. *Tib.* 62; Tac. *Ann.* 6.46.

dies angry and frustrated that he has thus forfeited his control over the succession—or, grudgingly recognising ‘the power of the deity’ (τοῦ θείου τῆς ἐξουσίας; *AJ* 18.214).

This story of succession leaves a sympathetic audience with at least two clear morals. First, in the case of supreme monarchs the succession process is absurd: at best, the government of the civilised world is left to utterly whimsical human choices, which God frequently undoes in order to make a point. Second, Tiberius himself is allowed to reflect fulsomely on the dangers of concentrating supreme power in one person: he foresees that Gaius will have Gemellus removed, yet nevertheless admonishes him to keep the relative alive for two reasons. On the one hand, it will be dangerous for Gaius if he isolates (μονώσεις) himself as supreme ruler. On the other hand, Tiberius knows that the gods will punish those who behave contrary to the laws (*AJ* 19.222–3)! One cannot but find in such remarks Josephus’ consistent perspectives, here ironically conveyed, on monarchy and aristocracy.

Finally, Josephus uses the Roman narrative of the *Antiquitates Judaicae* to make yet another case for aristocracy, now coupled with a fairly direct indictment of Roman monarchy. We see this most clearly in the speech of the consul Gnaeus Sentius Saturninus after Gaius’ death (*AJ* 19.167–84). Although he does not use the word ἀριστοκρατία, Sentius urges his colleagues in the senate to preserve their new-found ‘dignity of freedom’ (τοῦ ἐλουθέρου τὴν ἀξίωσιν, 19.167), ‘possessing which is happiness’ (εὐδαιμονία συνάγουσαν, 19.167). It was freedom and attendant ‘virtue’ (ἀρετή) that characterised ‘the laws under which [Rome] formerly flourished when it lived by regulating itself (νόμων, οἷς ποτε ἤνθησε, διαιτωμένα βιωθεῖσα, 19.168), namely, in the republican period. In contrast to these glorious days of freedom past known from tradition, Sentius has seen with his own eyes ‘with what evils tyrannies pollute constitutions (οἷων κακῶν τὰς πολιτείας ἀναμιμπλᾶσιν, 19.172).

According to Sentius, Iulius Caesar became the first tyrant:

διαβασάμενος τὸν κόσμον τῶν νόμων τὴν πολιτείαν συνετάραξεν, κρείσσων μὲν τοῦ δικαίου γεγόμενος, ἥσσω δὲ τοῦ κατ’ ἰδίαν ἡδονὴν αὐτῷ κομιδόντος.
(Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 19.173)

He threw the constitution into chaos by churning up the proper order of the laws. Whereas he had made himself mightier than justice, he was actually in thrall to that which served his private pleasure.

Then Josephus does not flinch from having Sentius connect Caesar with the Julio-Claudian emperors as a group:

... φιλοτιμηθέντων πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀπάντων, οἱ ἐκεῖνῳ διάδοχοι τῆς ἀρχῆς κατέστησαν, ἐπ' ἀφανίσμῳ τοῦ παγρίου καὶ ὡς ἂν μάλιστα τῶν πολιτῶν ἐρημίαν τοῦ γενναίου καταλείποιεν.

(Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 19.174)

... all of them competing with one another, those who established themselves as his successors in the principate set on the disappearance of our heritage and with the definite purpose that they might leave in their wake a devastation of our citizens' nobility.

Although Sentius' elite audience has become accustomed to thinking like prisoners, he says, the consul ironically invites them even to disagree with him about this issue of freedom (19.178) because, without a 'master' (δεσπότης) watching them now, with 'absolute power to remove those who have spoken' (αὐτοκράτορι μεταστήσασθαι τοὺς εἰρηκότας), such disagreement is welcome (19.179). He concludes with the *coup-de-maitre*, invoking the example of Brutus and Cassius (19.182–4), while recommending honours for Gaius' assassins, who have now outstripped those men in an act of tyrant-slaying (τυραννοκτονία, 19.184). This verdict against the Julio-Claudian dynasty as a whole is even stronger than Tacitus' celebration of the new freedom after Domitian (*Agr.* 2–3)—and with the crucial difference that Josephus wrote while Domitian was in power.

Several features confirm Josephus' profound authorial investment in this speech. First, the part of the speech above that connects Iulius Caesar and tyranny contains many verbal parallels with Josephus' earlier narrative. Earlier in the *Antiquitates Judaicae* he characterises the rebellious Israelites at the time of the Judges thus (correspondence emphasised):

... μετακινήθεντες γάρ ἅπαξ τοῦ κόσμου τῆς πολιτείας ἐφέροντο πρὸς τὸ καθ' ἡδονὴν καὶ βούλησιν ἰδίαν βιοῦν, ὡς καὶ τῶν ἐπιχωριαζόντων παρὰ τοῖς Χαναναίοις ἀναπίμπλασθαι κακῶν.

(Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 5.179)

... once they had been drawn away from the *proper order of the constitution*, they were carried away into living *for pleasure and personal whim*, with the result that *they were polluted with the vices* that were habitual among the Canaanites.

Again Josephus introduces the speech as one that befits 'free' (ἐλεύθεροι) and noble men—no longer slaves under tyranny (*AJ* 19.166)—and

Sentius' opening remark is that the possession of 'freedom' (τὸ ἐλεύθερον) is 'happiness' (εὐδαιμονία, 19.167). This language recalls other Josephan passages. Moses tells the Israelites that God has given them 'freedom' (ἐλευθερία) and 'possession of a happy land' (γῆς κτήσιν εὐδαίμονος, *AJ* 3.300). Volume 18 opens with the anti-Roman rebel Judas the Gaulanite trying to reclaim that promise, for recovering 'freedom' (ἐλευθερία) would 'lay the foundation of happiness' (τὸ εὐδαιμον ἀνακειμένης τῆς κτήσεως, *AJ* 18.5). Similarly, the speech of Sentius recalls various key-word conjunctions from the prologue to *Antiquitates Judaicae*: 'virtue' (ἀρετή) and 'happiness' (εὐδαιμονία, *AJ* 19.167–8; cf. 1.20), and 'lesson' (τὸ παιδεύμα) and 'virtue' (ἀρετή); cf. 1.20–1).⁶³ Sentius also uses Josephus' key word 'constitution' (πολιτεία) no fewer than three times (*AJ* 19.172, 173, 178), in the last case making an explicit comparison, as Josephus does elsewhere: 'of all constitutions' (αἵτερ πολιτειῶν), he says, the one in which the senators are responsible only to one other 'best guarantees present good will and future safety from plots' (ἐχεγγυάταται πρὸς τε τὸ παρὸν εὖνουν καὶ τὸ αὐθις ἀνεπιβούλευτον, *AJ* 19.178). This reflects Josephus' consistent appeal for the superiority of senatorial aristocracy.

It may seem strange that the consul describes the liberty of the senate as 'democracy' (δημοκρατία, *AJ* 19.173), a usage confirmed in the surrounding narrative (19.162, 187). But this too matches Josephus' language elsewhere. We should note first that, according to the much briefer parallel passage in the *Bellum Judaicum* (2.204), the senate wished either to restore the *aristokratia* under which they had lived in bygone years or to choose a worthy *princeps* for themselves. This Josephan parallel and the immediate context in the *Antiquitates Judaicae* indicate that 'democracy' is used here as a way of describing aristocracy. Just as Polybius observed that Roman republican government could be described as monarchy, aristocracy or democracy, depending upon the observer's focus (Polyb. 6.11.12), so too Josephus can describe his beloved priestly aristocracy as 'democratic' (δημοκρατία, δημοκρατικός, *BJ* 4.319, 358; *AJ* 20.234).⁶⁴ Athenian-style democracy does not enter the picture: he seems to have in mind an aristocracy that represents the true welfare of the people—over against the atrocities of the tyrants during the war.

⁶³ These account for two of only five occurrences of 'lesson' (παιδεύμα) in Josephus.

⁶⁴ Others attribute Josephus' differences of language to discrete sources: Attridge (1984) 227 n. 66; Schwartz (1983–84) 30–52. See also the discussion in Feldman (1998) 145 n. 7.

In this passage on Roman affairs, similarly, only two options appear: tyranny and democracy. The Roman soldiers choose to sponsor Claudius because the only alternative they know is an impractical 'democracy' (δημοκρατία, *AJ* 19.162). They clarify in another place: they did not like the rapacity demonstrated by senators when those men had held 'power' (ἀρχή) before (*AJ* 19.224). By δημοκρατία, further, Josephus indicates the constitution that was destroyed by Iulius Caesar (*AJ* 19.173) and the system under which the senate controlled Rome's armies (19.187). According to *AJ* 19.228, the only choice the 'people' (δῆμος) have is whether the senate or a *princeps* will best represent their interests. They choose the monarch as a check on the senate's power. And again, the senators insist that if Claudius chooses to assume the principate, he must at least receive it as a gift from the senate (*AJ* 19.235). The 'democracy' in view here, then, is the complex republican balance: popular voting assemblies, to be sure, but with senatorial magistrates overseeing public affairs.⁶⁵

I leave out of this analysis the most obvious indicators of Josephus' control over the Roman narrative, which are the regular editorial asides in which he pointedly connects the story to his larger aims (*AJ* 18.260, 284, 286, 288, 303, 306–7; 19.15–16, 61, 68–9, 106–8, 155–6, 196–8, 201–11). At least some of these are commonly excised as mere seams imposed on essentially alien material.⁶⁶ Even without these asides and short speeches, the Roman material is clearly well managed by Josephus for his purposes. It meshes tightly with the paramount themes of the *Antiquitates Judaicae*.

Conclusions

We set out to define the shape and content of Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaicae-Vita*—what was on the lines—and its likely meaning for an audience in Domitian's Rome: what was between the lines. As to the former, I have argued that the entire work, including volumes 18–20 and the *Vita*, develops its themes in a coherent way. Josephus wrote a primer in Judaeon history and culture, paying special atten-

⁶⁵ Wiseman (1991) 74 notes that the description of republican government as 'democratic' will become common in Appian and Dio.

⁶⁶ Wiseman (1991) xiii.

tion to the nation's extremely ancient constitution. He took a strong position against monarchy, favouring hereditary priestly-senatorial governance of the always restive masses. Sentius' oration is replete with the most basic themes of the *Antiquitates Judaicae*; the concentric structure of the book highlights these even more; and Josephus concludes both the *Antiquitates Judaicae* and the *Contra Apionem* with further reference to constitutional issues.

As for what sits between the lines: we know that Josephus wrote in Domitian's Rome, at about the time when the *princeps* was getting rid of nobles who had hinted criticisms of his monarchical rule, also of some who stood accused of Judaising. Josephus drew tacit parallels between Judaeian and Roman history at numerous points and levels: his scornful references to Greek ways, rhetorical historiography and intersections of narrative detail with famous Roman accounts. Explicitly, he included a lengthy discussion of the Roman constitutional issues from Tiberius' succession problem to the grizzly murder of the bad seed Gaius Caligula and the accession of the pathetic Claudius. Josephus set the entire work in the framework of outsiders' interest in Judaeian culture. These conclusions appear beyond dispute.

At this point, we are left with a fairly stark choice. Either Josephus' many points of intersection with Roman political life are merely coincidental or he made them with intent. Surprisingly, to the uninitiated, scholarship has all but exclusively favoured an accidental, source-driven explanation of the Roman material, as of much else in Josephus. Yet we have seen that the evidence favours Josephus' intelligent control. We have little choice, it seems to me, but to conclude that he wished not only to praise the Judaeian constitution before his inquisitive Roman audience, but also to comment on Roman affairs—as directly as any writer would dare at this point in Domitian's reign.

22. ACCIPE DIVITIAS ET VATUM MAXIMUS ESTO: MONEY, POETRY, MENDICANCY AND PATRONAGE IN MARTIAL

Barbara K. Gold

Introduction

Martial is a poet who makes us want to believe him. His critics focus heavily on his 'mendicant facade'¹ and his role as a social commentator, critic and realist. Martial, like his fellow satirist and near contemporary Juvenal, is regarded as a valuable source of information about the Flavian Rome of the late first-century CE and, even more fascinating, a *reliable* source, this despite the fact that Martial wrote in an avowedly satirical vein that aimed at giving an epigrammatic point to his material.² Social historians are particularly fascinated by what Martial has to say about the system of relationships based on patronage that so infused Roman society and culture and functioned as one of the major social mechanisms for the production of power in both republican and imperial Rome.³ There is no single subject that receives more attention in Martial's epigrams than the troubled relations between *amici* ('friends') or patrons and their clients.⁴

In Martial's poetry, the number of patrons is staggering, the complaints about the system frequent and strident, and the references to

¹ Hardie (1983) 70; Saller (1983) 246; Sullivan (1991) 3–4. Post (1908) xiii says Martial is 'a chronic beggar'.

² When I refer to Martial as the fellow *satirist* of Juvenal, I am aware that technically Martial wrote epigrams, not satires. Satire is, however, a genre with fluid boundaries that is found in many other types of literature (most notably comedy). While Martial's and Juvenal's approaches to describing the Rome of the first and second centuries CE are somewhat different (see below, 'Realism in Martial') and the length of their works are at variance, both rearrange details of social situations to make a point and employ exaggeration to achieve absurd effects. Thus it is fair to call Martial a satirical writer although he did not, strictly speaking, write satires.

³ See White (1975) 265–300; Hardie (1983); Saller (1983) 246–57; Cloud (1989) 205–18; Sullivan (1991).

⁴ See Saller (1983) 255–6 for a discussion of terms used in relationships of superiors and inferiors.

money bald and breathtaking. Martial has an almost obsessive interest in money—both in the abstract and the concrete—and in gifts (money and goods), the dole and loans. His poems are crowded with words for giving, asking, buying, selling and owning.⁵ Quite unlike his Augustan counterparts, who take pains to downplay interest in financial remuneration and stress the importance of poetry over any payment for it (cf., e.g., Prop. 1.6; 3.9), Martial seems almost to flaunt his need for money and to press the point in embarrassingly obvious ways. This has given rise to many condemnations of Martial for being shrill, servile, undignified, bullying and mendicant.⁶

It seems to me that the way we read and interpret Martial's treatment of 'reality' will colour our analysis of the poet's self-presentation as a mendicant, his portrayal of the institution of patronage—largely through his own experiences—and the effect of these obsessions on his poetry. I would like, therefore, to ask the following questions: (1) What does it mean to say that Martial writes 'realistic' poetry? (2) What can we understand about Martial, his age and contemporaries, and about Martial's treatment of patronage from his self-presentation as a 'mendicant' who has an avowed and blatant interest in money? (3) How can an understanding of these issues illuminate the workings of patronage in Flavian/imperial Rome? I shall focus in at

⁵ See García-Hernández (1986) 241–58; Ramírez Sádaba (1986) 153–68; Sullivan (1991) 122.

⁶ See Hardie (1983) 70; Saller (1983) 255 ('Martial's undignified requests'); Sullivan (1991) 121–3. Over the centuries, some writers (particularly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but also closer to Martial's time) have sympathised with Martial's obsession with the financial aspect of being a writer, while others have condemned him roundly. For examples of the former, see Sen. *Ben.* 7.23.3 (*Cum dicimus beneficium repeti non oportere, non ex toto repetitionem tollimus; saepe enim opus est malis exactore, etiam bonis admonitione. . . . Interueniat aliquando admonitio, sed uerecunda, quae non poscat nec in ius uocet*, 'When I say that one shouldn't seek a benefit in return, I am not completely disallowing this possibility; often delinquent people need to be dunned and even good people need a nudge. . . . Sometimes we need to give someone a nudge but one that is delivered tastefully and not as a demand or a legal order') and Samuel Johnson, *Vanity of Human Wishes* 159–60 ('There mark what ills the scholar's life assail/toil, envy, want, the patron and the jail' [see McAdam (1964) 99]) and 'no man but a blockhead ever wrote for money' [Hill and Powell (1934) 19]). In the first quote, Johnson replaced Juvenal's 'garret' with the word 'patron' to annoy Lord Chesterfield. For the latter, see Lord Macauley's famous assessment of Martial's servile flattery and indecency ('I wish he were less nauseous . . . his indecency, his servility and his mendicancy disgust me' [see Trevelyan [1878] 458 for this letter] and Byron's lines in *Don Juan* 1.43 ('And then what proper person could be partial/To all those nauseous epigrams of Martial?' [Steffan, Steffan and Pratt (1982) 56])).

the end on one of Martial's odder statements, at *Epigrams* 8.55.24, to try to peel back the corners of his mind and to help answer or at least shed light on some of these questions.

Realism in Martial

Hoc lege, quod possit dicere uita, 'Meum est'.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 10.4.8)

Read this, of which life could say 'that's mine'.

Martial, like Juvenal after him, derides the bombastic and trivial mythological epics and tragedies of writers like Statius, the *uana* . . . *miserae ludibria chartae* ('empty sham of a wretched piece of writing', 10.4.7), in favour of his style of poetry, a poetry that takes as its subject the daily events of Roman life: *hominem pagina nostra sapit* ('my pages smack of mankind', 10.4.10).⁷ In *Epigrams* 10.4, which is an *apologia* for his lowly epigrams, Martial defends his chosen genre against those kinds of poetry that were popularly regarded as weightier and thought to be far preferable (*durior*, 'harsher/weightier', Propertius might have said, not *mollis*, 'soft/tender', like elegy) to the *nugae* ('trifles') of epigram, satire and elegy. Rather, however, than taking the defensive position and writing a conventional *recusatio*,⁸ admitting weakness and saying that he is only writing epigrams by default (as an elegist might have done), Martial here goes on the offensive, calling his exposé of life's manners and morals quite the opposite of the 'empty twaddle' that defines myth and tragedy. He thereby reverses the conventional view of his genre as *nugae*, *ludibria* ('jests/sham') and *lusus* ('games'), and he assigns that role to his rivals' verse.⁹

⁷ I am using the Latin text of Lindsay (1929). The translations are partly my own, partly from Ker (1919–20), and partly from Shackleton Bailey (1993). See *Epigr.* 5.53 and cf. *Epigr.* 8.3, esp. 19–22; 9.50. *Epigr.* 8.3.20 is very similar to 10.4.10: *adgnoscat mores uita legatque suos* ('let life recognise and read of her own ways').

⁸ For the words *mollis* ('soft') and *durus* ('hard') in elegy, see Gold (1987) 149–72; for the *recusatio*, see Gold (1987) 65, 166–7, 220 n. 2 *et passim*.

⁹ Martial does elsewhere call his own verses *nugae* ('trifles', e.g., *Epigr.* 6.64.7; cf. 9.50.1–2). There is some thought that Martial might be referring to Statius' poetry (his *Thebaid* contains a lengthy description of Parthenopaeus, who is highlighted by Martial in *Epigr.* 10.4.3, and there are other possible allusions). See Hardie (1983) 57 (on another possible reference to Statius); Sullivan (1991) 73 n. 32, 125–6.

Thus Martial takes the moral and aesthetic high ground. But he goes beyond that: he claims for his brand of poetry the prerogative of dealing with the realistic details of quotidian life, the kind of details that will permit the reader to 'know thyself' (*sed non uis, Mamurra, tuos cognoscere mores/nec te scire*, 'but you don't want, Mamurra, to recognise your own behaviour or yourself', 10.4.11–12). The stuff of epic and tragedy he dismisses not only overtly but by his choice of affective words: *caligantem* ('shrouded in darkness', 10.4.1), *monstra* ('monsters', 2), *raptus* ('ravished', 3), *exutus . . . pinnis labentibus* ('stripped of his gliding wings', 5), *odit amatrices aquas* ('he hates the amorous waters', 6). Such poetic fictions are, he claims, irrelevant for his human readers.

But, if one thinks about it, an odd claim it is that Martial, a satirical epigrammatist who makes his point by exaggeration, hyperbole and revisions of fact, can lead the reader to 'know himself' when the *Oedipus*, a play that is precisely about finding one's identity, is rejected as *uana ludibria* ('empty twaddle', 7). Myth was thought to embody and to contain the deepest truths of all.

So in what sense are Martial's epigrams more 'realistic' than poems in these other genres? How do his poems help the readers to understand themselves and their times? What sort of truth claims is Martial making? Does Martial intend to be offering a transparently realistic portrait of Roman life?

Reflection on Juvenal's brand of 'realism' in his satires might help us to understand what Martial is saying.¹⁰ The 'realism' of Martial and Juvenal is possible largely because the material in these two satirical writers comes out of an urban experience and context. Most of their subject matter could only be found in cities (patrons and clients; the *sportula*; the *salutatio*; the emperor's trips and laws; freedmen and slaves; professions and trades; holiday gifts; banquets; Roman games and festivals; other poets; estates; politics; book production

¹⁰ I do not mean to imply here that Martial and Juvenal wrote in the same mode or under the same generic constraints or historical conditions. Many critics since Friedländer's commentaries on the two poets have made this assumption (e.g., Gérard (1976) *passim*; Marache (1961) *passim*). Although the two poets do have many things in common in their writings and were rough contemporaries, the differences between Martial's shorter epigrams and Juvenal's longer satires are substantial and require different ways of reading. In addition, Martial writes more frequently and admirably of the country than does Juvenal, who is an unrelentingly urban poet; see Gold (1998) 53–69. On the relationship between Martial's poems and social reality, see Cloud (1989) 205–7.

and sales; recitations), and this is the only milieu that could still engender and support satirical verse. In addition to being urban, satire is also a highly self-reflexive form of literature that at least pretends to depend upon external material. It needs to draw—or makes the claim to draw—its most vibrant details from historical reality and is heavily dependent on agencies outside of itself.¹¹ This authorial insistence on the presentation of a transparent reality—helped out by a tumbling mass of detail and specificity that often overwhelms and confuses (e.g., *Epigr.* 8.33; 10.47; 11.8)—co-opts the reader into believing that he or she is receiving a true picture of the Rome of the first and second centuries CE.¹²

Both Martial and Juvenal had a background that included educations in rhetoric, law and declamation. Juvenal is well-known as a satirist whose discourse is dominated by the formal trappings of rhetoric.¹³ As Braund has observed, 'rhetoric is not something grafted onto Juvenal; it is his idiom'.¹⁴ While we could argue that Juvenal foregrounds the tropes and figures he uses in order to call attention to his own rhetoricality and his own self-fashioning in a unique way, the works of many of Juvenal's contemporaries were also pervaded by the influence of formal rhetorical training and were performative, highly self-reflexive, and self-conscious in nature.

This includes Martial. Both writers, in choosing to write in the genres they did, were able to construct themselves as subjects in a particular social and historical context. This subjectivity allows them to assume what seem to be consistent and natural personalities and to create a seemingly stable historical and social backdrop that appears far more consistent in its portrayal than it actually was. Thus Martial and Juvenal are creating in their satires and epigrams a coordinated and unified image for the reader/audience.

In counterpoint to this creation of a stable image, Juvenal and Martial also at the same time create ways of distancing themselves from their material and of ironising it. Both are writing in genres that are (as mentioned above) overtly and insistently rhetorical. And both offer material that is dramatic and performative in nature. They

¹¹ See Kernan (1971) 249–53; Gold (1998) 53–5.

¹² Cf. Salemme (1976) 9 for Martial's use of concrete detail.

¹³ For Juvenal as rhetorician, see De Decker (1913); Anderson (1961) 3–93; Kenney (1963) 704–20; Gold (forthcoming).

¹⁴ Braund (1996) 18.

construct portraits of themselves, which are often internally consistent and thus believable for the moment, as opaque, honest and integrated. But then again, jarring details will spring up in other poems to undercut this unified picture,¹⁵ or the poet will undermine himself with rhetorical tropes and figures, performative elements or epigrammatic twists.

We have then self-conscious moments of rhetoric and performance intruding into an otherwise seemingly consistent portrait of reality. Let us return to Martial at this point, examine his background and rhetoricism, and determine what impact these might have had on his portrayal of patronage in Rome in the Flavian era. We are told by Martial himself that he was educated in Spain by *grammatici* and *rhetores* (*Epigr.* 9.73.7–8). He was pressured, he says, to take up the profession of advocacy, one that would be more profitable than poetry, but he declined and often derides this profession (1.17; 2.30.5–6; 12.68.3–4). But Martial's earlier training (like Juvenal's) infused his epigrams with rhetorical devices and tropes (such as anadiplosis, anaphora, hyperbole, use of dramatic openings and rhetorical questions)¹⁶ and with a strong sense of *enargeia* or realism.

This realism, achieved through a pretence of neutral observation, a heavy use of specific and compelling detail, and outright claims to honesty in his verse,¹⁷ has convinced many a critic of Martial that he is what he says: a neutral observer of Roman daily life.¹⁸ But he, like Juvenal, gives us a very *selective* portrait of 'reality', leavened with declamatory rhetoric, distancing irony and humour and, in Martial's case, the striving to make his epigrammatic point. He, like Juvenal, is not 'a reliable source for social history'.¹⁹ Thus we must learn

¹⁵ For examples, see Cloud (1989) 205–18.

¹⁶ See Sullivan (1991) 221–2; Barwick (1959) 3.

¹⁷ Cf. the preface to book 1, where Martial defends the 'frankness of my humour' (*iocorum nostrorum simplicitate*, *Epigr.* 1 *praef.* 6–7), 'the titillating candour of my words' (*lasciuam uerborum ueritatem*, 1 *praef.* 9), and the plainness of his Latin (*Latine loqui fas sit*, 'it is permissible to speak in plain/blunt Latin', 1 *praef.* 13). Although Martial is defending here his use of possibly offensive language, his choice of the words *simplicitas* ('frankness') and *ueritas* ('candour') also connote truthfulness to actual Roman life.

¹⁸ See the comments of Sullivan (1991) 222 here; he jokingly calls Martial a nineteenth-century novelist. See also the comments of Stephenson (1887) 243, who says, 'Martial, who beyond a doubt was an eye-witness of what he described'.

¹⁹ Cloud (1989) 216; he goes on to say, 'for attitudes as well as for facts the historian would be well advised to make wary use of Martial but give a very wide berth indeed to Juvenal'. See also Saller (1983) 246.

what we can from Martial about patronage, mendicancy and poetry, but not expect to believe all that we read. And we must pay close attention to Martial's self-presentation and constructed subjectivity.

Patronage

Otia da nobis, sed qualia fecerat olim
Maecenas Flacco Vergilioque suo . . .
in steriles nolunt campos iuga ferre iuueni:
pingue solum lassat, sed iuuat ipse labor.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 1.107.3–4, 7–8)

Give me leisure, the sort that Maecenas gave to his Horace and Virgil. . . . Oxen are not willing to carry the yoke into barren fields; a fertile soil tires but the work itself delights.

Three of the most puzzling things about the enigmatic Martial are his frequent, blatant and often off-putting references to money or remuneration in all its various forms, the extraordinarily large number of patrons whom he addresses in his epigrams,²⁰ and his exaggerated (and undeserved) flattery of the sometimes tight-fisted emperor Domitian. These obsessions are not, of course, unrelated. As a result of this fascination with money in all its manifestations and in the crasser sides of patronage, Martial has been the recipient of some rather unflattering assessments by both recent critics and older ones.²¹

Martial's background (insofar as we know it), his life as a poet and client of emperors and aristocrats, and his relationship to the Roman imperial patronage system have all been well-summarised and analysed by a number of recent critics and do not need to be rehearsed here.²² There is disagreement about Martial's status as a client and whether he was of sufficiently independent means that he did not need financial support from his patrons but rather, perhaps, less tangible gifts (such as help in disseminating his poetry, publicity,

²⁰ It is often not easy to tell the status of these 'patrons': who is a genuine patron and who should be classified as an *amicus* ('friend') of equal status? See Saller (1983) 256; White (1975) 265–300, esp. 265–6; Hardie (1983) 53–4.

²¹ See above, 'Introduction'. See also Hardie (1983) 52, 70, who says that Martial was 'heavily tainted with Flavian associations' and refers to Martial's 'mendicant facade', which he calls misleading.

²² See Szelest (1974) 105–14; Saller (1982); Saller (1983) 246–57; Hardie (1983); White (1975) 265–300; White (1978) 74–92; Cloud (1989) 205–18; Sullivan (1991).

venues for recitations, protection from plagiarists and critics). White believes that Martial, who had equestrian status, did not need gifts of money and further that literary clients were like other clients in their needs and desires and not a special breed.²³ White says that 'poets attached themselves to wealthy households for reasons that had little to do with their poetic interests, and much to do with the composition of Roman society . . . once established in the *amicitia* ['friendship'] of a rich man, poets received material benefits which were the perquisites of friends rather than the due of poetry'.²⁴ Saller takes issues with both these claims, maintaining first that poets like Martial, although *equites* ('knights'), did not have adequate income or capital to support themselves and that they needed substantial benefits and gifts of money and, second, that the relationships of *amicitia* in which a poet like Martial was enmeshed, were 'peculiarly "literary"'.²⁵ I believe, with Saller, that clients who were writers differed in important ways from other kinds of dependents in Rome, although all *amici* were involved in a much larger political and social nexus of exchange relationships that dominated Roman culture.²⁶ Further, I believe that there is much evidence to confirm that Martial in particular (I focus on him since it is very hard to generalise about this) did need or desire monetary rewards as well as gifts of other kinds and that he had a particular fascination with the significance of money, both symbolic and concrete, in the context of the Roman culture of the first century CE. It is this fascination and its connection to Domitianic Rome that I would like to discuss in the remainder of this chapter.

Economies

In order to understand Martial, we need to go back to his Greek literary predecessors and to two in particular: Simonides and Pindar.

²³ White (1978) 74–92, esp. 77–82 (p. 82: 'poets were *amici* ["friends"] and *sodales* ["clients"] like anybody else'), 88–92, where White (1978) 88 speaks of the 'comparative self-sufficiency' of most of the Roman poets about whose lives we know some details. White is countered by Saller (1983) 246, 250–3.

²⁴ White (1978) 92.

²⁵ See Saller (1983) 248–53, 256–7; Hardie (1983) 54, who also argues that Martial's relationships of *amicitia* were intricately bound up with his profession as a poet; Sullivan (1991) 124–5 and n. 13.

²⁶ See Gold (1987); Johnson and Dandeker (1989) 219–42.

A great deal of interesting work has been done recently on the economy of literature—or perhaps we should say economy in literature and the poetics of values—by Anne Carson (for Simonides) and Leslie Kurke (for Pindar).²⁷ There is much wisdom in these analyses of structures of thought in Simonides and Pindar to illuminate our questions and allay our (and others') anxieties about Martial. As Carson states, economy—no matter in what context (math, art and architecture, poetry)—‘is a trope of intellectual, aesthetic and moral value’.²⁸ After the invention of coinage (*c.* early to mid-sixth century BCE²⁹), economy became a pervasive trope that governed all aspects of human thought and behaviour (e.g., kinship, marriage, patronage).

But a long-standing system of gift exchange had existed, well exemplified in the Homeric epics, that was deeply embedded in ancient Greek practices. In the Greece of Simonides during the sixth and fifth centuries, this older system of gift exchange was not really supplanted by but rather coexisted with the new system of a money-based economy. The values of the two systems were completely contradictory and there was a mistrust of money earning, trade and commercial activity that stretched from archaic Greece down into imperial Rome. The new monetary system violated the whole spirit of *xenia* (gift-giving relationship): while a gift economy is based on community, a money economy is tied more to individuals who, in accumulating wealth and power, can threaten community;²⁹ while a gift economy is based on the very important idea of *reciprocity* and of giving away more than you receive (and thus continual indebtedness and the possibility of future exchange), a money economy has as its goal personal accumulation;³⁰ while a gift economy has as its conservative aim to maintain the status quo in equilibrium, a money economy strives to change the structures; while the objectification of value into money alienates people from one another and creates boundaries, gift giving forms a connective bridge between giver and recipient, a bridge that always runs in two directions.³¹ The gift, as Bourdieu says, is ‘defined by the counter-gift in which it is completed and in

²⁷ See Carson (1999); Kurke (1991); Kurke (1999).

²⁸ Carson (1999) 3.

²⁹ G. Nagy in his forward to Kurke (1991) ix.

³⁰ See Carson (1999) 13–14; Morris (1986) 1–17, esp. 2–3.

³¹ See Carson (1999) 10–27.

which it realizes its full significance',³² and the system in which the gift operates is one of 'alternating disequilibrium'.³³

Simonides is often said to be the first professional poet; a scholiast says that he was the first poet to introduce meticulous calculation into songmaking and to compose poems at a wage.³⁴ And he very soon (therefore) developed a reputation for being a greedy and miserly money grubber.³⁵ This tradition reflects less on what Simonides actually did or thought than on the anxieties of a liminal age caught between two competing and conflicting economic systems. The presence of money changed what had been an exchange relationship between kinspeople or friends into a depersonalised system in which poet was separated from patron, the old rules were no longer in force, and the value of poetry came to have a very different meaning. The poet now had both more and less power than he did under this hybrid of two impossibly different systems. Carson believes that Simonides 'represents an early, severe form of economic alienation and the "doubleness" that attends it' and that 'balanced on a borderline between two economic systems', he is a man 'trying to live upright in an inverted world', constantly off balance.³⁶ And so Simonides pondered these questions as he sold his poetic wares.

Gift Exchange

Extra fortunam est quidquid donatur amicis:
quas dederis solas semper habebis opes.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 5.42.7–8)

Whatever is given to friends is beyond the reach of Fortune; the only thing that you will always own is what you give away.

Did Martial puzzle over such questions as Simonides did about wealth, rewards and patrons? I am not, I hasten to say, drawing

³² Bourdieu (1966) 213.

³³ Morris (1986) 2.

³⁴ *Scholia ad Pind. Isth. 2 praef.*; see Kurke (1991) 7 and n. 22 (she cites Drachmann [1927] 214.9a); Carson (1999) 15–16.

³⁵ Aristophanes even includes Simonides as a stock figure of greed in *Pax* 697–9; see Carson (1999) 15. Carson (1999) 124 also brings up Protagoras in this context who 'gave people a shock by putting a price on a commodity previously called "wisdom" or "truth"'.
³⁶ Carson (1999) 19, 21.

any analogies between the social and political climate of the sixth and fifth centuries BCE of Simonides and Pindar and the Flavian Rome of Martial; nor am I saying that the concerns of Simonides can be attributed to Martial just because they were both poets with patrons. But I do believe that we can see in Martial's poetry even after 600 years time many of the same economic and cultural forces driving the poetic mind and the same system of support and reward. Even after so long a passage of time, poets were still in a double bind, caught between the conditions of the money-based economy and commodity trade and the older, more traditional gift-exchange relationships that receive their first literary airings in the Homeric texts (e.g., *Od.* 8.90–103, 477–8; 9.1–11) and that continue as *xenia* in one form or another, in parallel with money-based economies, well into Roman times.

The features of *xenia* that are still present in Flavian patronage relationships are: reciprocity, inequality of status, asymmetricality of relationship and giving, and continuity. Such a relationship is predicated on a personal relationship that continues over a period of time, and it is marked by three types of obligations: giving, receiving and repaying.³⁷ Such gift giving is not just a material exchange or transaction, as would be the case with giving in a money economy; it binds the two parties together in a personal and ongoing way. The gift in this kind of exchange is less important as an object than for its symbolic value and its ability to create and maintain community.

I would like then to examine some of Martial's poems to patrons, especially the emperor Domitian, and about patronage in the light of these definitions of how gift exchange and economies could operate and to reevaluate Martial's purported obsession with money and gifts and his reputation as a 'chronic beggar'.³⁸ Did Martial puzzle over the same questions that Simonides did? Sullivan makes the claim that Martial was 'basically unreflective of the relationship between patron and literary client' and that he 'would not have pondered the serious questions about the connection between power and money, patronage and propaganda, and literature and politics'.³⁹

³⁷ See the important essay by Mauss (1967) 37–41; Kurke (1991) 92–7.

³⁸ Post (1908) xiii.

³⁹ Sullivan (1991) 124–6.

I would take issue with these statements. Because of the brevity of most of Martial's epigrams, he was not able to write lengthy philosophical discourses about the clash of the two economic systems and the effects of this clash on the writers. But the cumulative effect of his many references to gift giving and to the mechanics of patronage create a coherent picture of a man who thought deeply and often about his position as a client and the duties and rights of his patrons; further, I would argue that there is embedded in all these brief snippets so focussed on the events of daily life a larger set of reflections on the relationships among power, money, patronage, literature and politics. And set in this context, Martial's seemingly peculiar obsession (to his later critics) with the crasser elements of gift giving and money (e.g., flattery of Domitian, large numbers of patrons, bald requests for money, and castigation of reluctant givers) might be explicable.

First, we should look at the picture that is developed of Martial in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a beggar, shameful flatterer and a man obsessed with money. Although there is certainly material in the epigrams that one could find to support the claims that Martial really was all of these things, there is precedent and parallel example to support a different explanation. Apparently, any writer that showed an explicit interest in money or pay in relation to his livelihood was held under suspicion in his own time and even to a greater degree by later critics who did not understand the economic status of poets and poetry: so Simonides was stereotyped as a 'skinflint' and a stock example of miserliness (even in his own time);⁴⁰ Pindar was characterised as a 'toady',⁴¹ and, in Flavian Rome, Statius, who is the first Latin poet to actually say that a particular poem was written for a particular request and to refer to an exchange of poetry for money,⁴² was satirised as a greedy poet. Juvenal, in alluding to Statius' libretto, written for the play *Agave* and to be sold to the pantomime Paris, implies that the poet is a pimp who is selling his wares in order to avoid starvation (*Sat.* 7.82–7; *esurit intactam Paridi nisi uendit Agauen*, 'he will starve unless he can sell his virgin [play] Agave to Paris', 7.87).⁴³

⁴⁰ See above, 'Economies'; Carson (1999) 15–17; Callim. frag. 222 (Pfeiffer [1949] 214); Hardie (1983) 32.

⁴¹ See Kurke (1991) 7 and n. 24, quoting Finley (1977) 45.

⁴² Hardie (1983) 70.

⁴³ See Stat. *Silv.* 2 *praef.* 22–24; Hardie (1983) 60–1. Hardie (1983) 72 points out

Thus there is good reason to think that any poet who made explicit reference to money and poetry might be stereotyped as a beggar, skinflint or money-grubber. As Carson says about Simonides, 'that Simonides devoted his life to avarice is hard to prove or disprove since, despite centuries of unanimous testimonial ranting about Simonidean greed, no source preserves a single account or real number to tell us how avid he was, how rich he became or what prices he actually charged. Evidently Simonidean greed was more resented in its essence than in its particulars. Its essence was the commodification of a previously reciprocal and ritual activity, the exchange of gifts between friends.'⁴⁴ And so might we speak of Martial's reputation.

In order to try to come to terms with the judgments of later critics on Martial in regard to his obsessions, greed, flattery of the great (mainly Domitian), treatment of subject matter (did he have a larger agenda or was he mired in the small, the particular, the insignificant?), and overall philosophy of giving (did he have one?), we must begin with (and return to) the most neglected part of his corpus, books 13 and 14, the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*. Martial came to Rome from his native Spain in *circa* 64 CE (*Epigr.* 10.103–4) and, after a period of fifteen years when we have virtually no information about him or knowledge of any literary output, he published in 80 CE the (now brief and abbreviated) *Liber de Spectaculis*, poems in honour of the opening of the Flavian Amphitheatre in 79 CE and written for the emperor Titus.⁴⁵ This was followed by the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta* in 85 CE.⁴⁶ These mostly two-line distichs, meant to accompany presents for guests (or to be gifts, *Epigr.* 13.3) at occasions like the *Saturnalia*, are sophisticated, well laid out, and a reliable harbinger

that 'it is an abiding irony that the one [Martial] should have caricatured his own greed, while the other [Statius], despite a more idealised *persona*, should have been satirised, in a later age, as a "greedy poet"'.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Carson (1999) 17.

⁴⁵ For Martial's early life and career, see Hardie (1983) 50–7; Sullivan (1991) 1–15; Friedländer (1886) 1.1–14. We do know that Martial wrote some poetry, his *juvenilia* ('youthful writings', *Epigr.* 1.113: *apinas nostras*, 'my worthless efforts', 2; *nugis*, 'trifles', 6; cf. *lusi*, 'I wrote in sport', 1), during the period from 64–79 CE. He certainly did not go from writing nothing at all to the full-blown, quite impressive book of verse for the opening of the amphitheatre. See Allen *et al.* (1970) 347–8 for the suggestion that Martial might have arrived in Rome somewhat earlier; Allen *et al.* (1970) 348 for his early career.

⁴⁶ For the numbering see Lindsay (1903) 10–12 and n. r., 65–120, and the *Praefatio* (unnumbered) in Lindsay (1929).

of the twelve other books of epigrams to come.⁴⁷ Here we find the same meticulous care given to what, when and how he is writing, with ample markers along the way for the reader. He tells readers that the gifts in the *libellus* ('little book'), either those described in the couplets or the couplets themselves, may be taken as they are, with or without the object described therein, or with *lemmata* ('headings') only (*Epigr.* 14.2).⁴⁸ Guests can eat their way through an entire, sumptuous meal in *Epigrams* 13 without ever having recourse to the food itself (13.13–100). Martial is ever focussed on the status of these poems and objects as gifts (e.g., 13.11, 27, 91; 14.6, 9, 13, 14, 21).

Martial's obsession with gifts and gift giving starts here, in his earliest work,⁴⁹ in the minute and concrete descriptions of these objects, but it reveals, even in such short compass, a sophisticated grasp of how gifts operate and what their greater symbolic value is. Gifts can be, he reveals here, words or objects, or even words that distil and define other words; these words can be tied to a concrete object or not. They can be for poor or rich; can be meagre or sumptuous; they can be food, pets, clothing, works of art or literary works.

Martial clearly understands the idea of commodification. He objectifies and commodifies gifts in the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta* and makes gift giving here into a major theme for his epigrams. Rarely does Martial inject himself into the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*; these poems are, for the most part, impersonal descriptions.⁵⁰ But we are prepared by them for a rather seamless transition into books 1–12, where gifts, gift giving, money and patronage become his overriding concerns, not just in reference to himself but in larger compass for the entire social and cultural system of Flavian Rome.⁵¹ He moves from gift commodification to a broader explication of the rules of a gift-exchange culture; gifts become less important as objects than as symbolic capital, the underpinnings of an entire cultural and moral system.

The great preponderance of words for giving, asking, possessing, receiving and the like shows Martial's preoccupation not only with

⁴⁷ The *Apophoreta* are often in pairs, alternating between gifts from and for rich and poor (*Epigr.* 14.1.5). For their sophistication see Sullivan (1991) 12 and n. 28.

⁴⁸ Lindsay (1903) in his *Praefatio* points out that the *lemmata* seem to have been written by Martial; cf. *Epigr.* 13.3.7; 14.2.

⁴⁹ See Sullivan (1991) 13–14.

⁵⁰ Only once is there a reference to his own situation: as a 'poor poet'. See *Epigr.* 13.3.6.

⁵¹ Even his title, *Xenia*, might point to a connection back to the Greek gift-giving exchange culture.

this semantic cluster but with the practices these words denote.⁵² As a part of this shift, Martial develops a convincing, if selective, *persona* of the poor poet and a caricature of life as a client.⁵³ This is not to say that everything in Martial's picture is fiction; many of his complaints were no doubt true, and there is a strong sense that a poet who was so concerned with factual details viewed his epigrams as an important way to record the life and spirit of his times.⁵⁴ Whether or not the details that Martial presents are factually true does not concern me here.

I would like now to look at some of Martial's more notable epigrams on the subjects of gift giving, patronage and the emperor Domitian in order to see if these can help us to form some answers to the three main questions posed: Did Martial think about the larger connections of power, money, patronage and poetry? Did he have a larger agenda? And did he have a philosophy of giving? *Epigrams* 8 is dominated by a cycle of nineteen poems (1, 2, 4, 8, 11, 15, 21, 24, 26, 30, 36, 39, 49, 53, 56, 65, 78, 80, 82) to the emperor Domitian.⁵⁵ In these poems, Martial praises Domitian's military successes and the temples built in his honour (8.1; 8.2; 8.4; 8.15; 8.65), his new palace (8.36), his popularity with the people (8.11), and the games (8.80). In *Epigrams* 8.24, an extraordinary poem, he asks Domitian for an unspecified gift, beginning by modestly calling his

⁵² For a list and analysis of these words and amounts of money mentioned, see García-Hernández (1986) 241–58 and Ramírez Sádaba (1986) 153–68.

⁵³ Hardie (1983) 55–6.

⁵⁴ Allen *et al.* (1970) 351. For the 'reality' of Martial's picture and his complaints, see above, 'Realism in Martial'; White (1975) 265–300; White (1978) 74–92; Saller (1983) 246–57; Hardie (1983), esp. 56, 214 n. 45, where he references White (1978) 76–7 but says that White may 'rely a little too heavily on Martial's statements being "autobiographical"'; and Cloud (1989) 205–16, esp. 206–7, who focuses mostly on Juvenal but is instructive for Martial too. Cloud (1989) 205 points out that, although Juvenal sets up a coherent picture of patron-client relationships within the *Satires*, this does 'not necessarily imply correspondence with the real-life institution'; Cloud (1989) 206–7 also maintains that Martial is preferable to Juvenal as a source of information on Rome because Martial simply exaggerates to absurdity rather than totally rearranging all the details into something entirely new, as Juvenal does.

⁵⁵ About seventy epigrams were addressed to Domitian, and many of those are in books 8 and 9. For the relationship of Martial and Domitian, see Allen *et al.* (1970) 345–57; Szelest (1974) 105–14; Daube (1976) 145–47; Millar (1977) 496–7; Saller (1983) 246–57; Sullivan (1991) 127–8, 130–7 *et passim*. Martial received from Domitian a tribunate (*Epigr.* 3.95.9), the *ius trium liberorum* (from Titus and Domitian; see Daube [1976] 145–7 and *Epigr.* 2.92; 3.95.5–6; 9.97.5–6), a knighthood (*Epigr.* 5.13.2; 9.49.4; 12.29.2), and grants of citizenship for others (*Epigr.* 3.95.11). But Domitian also turned down some of his requests (*Epigr.* 6.10).

book a *timidus* ('bashful') and *gracilis libellus* ('slender little book') and apologising if his book (not he) seems *inprobus* ('shameless'):

si quid forte petam timido gracilique libello,
 improba non fuerit si mea charta, dato.
 et si non dederis, Caesar, permitte rogari:
 offendunt numquam tura precesque Iouem.
 qui fingit sacros auro vel marmore uultus,
 non facit ille deos: qui rogat, ille facit.

If I might ask for something in my bashful and slender little book, and if my page is not overly shameless, please grant it. And even if you do not grant it, Caesar, allow that it might be asked for: incense and prayer offerings never offend Jupiter. The person who makes sacred icons of gold or marble does not fashion gods; it is the petitioner who does.

The key line in *Epigrams* 8.24 is line 3: *et si non dederis, Caesar, permitte rogari* ('And even if you do not grant it, Caesar, allow that it might be asked for.'). The object of Martial's request is unclear (*quid*, 'something', 8.24.1); the emphasis rather falls on the verbal acts of asking and giving (*petam*, 'I might ask', 1; *dato*, 'please grant it', 2, both in significant places in the lines). *Dato* is repeated again in different form in *dederis* ('you do grant', 3), where he asks the emperor to at least allow Martial the act of asking (*rogari*, 'be asked for', 3) even if his unspecified request cannot be given. It is important here that the verb is in the passive, which takes Martial's agency out of the equation and focuses squarely on the act itself. This poem acts as a crucible for the language of patron and client, and it highlights not the gift but the acts of asking/giving/receiving/repaying. All the steps of a gift-exchange relationship are here or are implied; ideally Martial asks/Domitian gives/Martial receives/Martial repays (in prayer, adulation, incense, divinisation). The objectifying and commodification that we saw in the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta* have transmuted into a different, more complex view of the gift-exchange culture. The gift itself is now unimportant, absent (and, in fact, outside the poem). It is the sequence of acts that is important, and this sequence commences with the act of asking. But Martial's asking is open-ended since it is tied to a strong implicit promise to glorify and even deify the emperor in his poems (8.24.6). Having made this slightly veiled promise, Martial has put the ball in Domitian's court and laid the next step in the obligation at his feet. So Martial sets up a series of conditionals:

if Martial does x , and if Domitian grants that Martial be able to do x , then Martial would do y and then Domitian would have to do z in return. Such a process never ends; it creates instead an ongoing contract. If Domitian does permit the gift to be asked for, the rest of the sequence can unfold and all the elements will fall into place: reciprocity, ongoing personal relationship, asymmetricality, permanent disequilibrium, creation of a community.

Epigrams 5.36 is Martial's short and clear pronouncement on what happens when the system of gift exchange fails (this poem has been taken as an example of Martial the greedy poet, but I see it as one more reflection on the system that so absorbs his attention):

laudatus nostro quidam, Faustine, libello
dissimulat, quasi nil debeat: inposuit.

A certain man, Faustinus, who was praised in my little book is pretending that he does not owe me anything: he is a cheater.

Martial has taken the first step in his relationship with the unnamed man,⁵⁶ praising him in his *libellus*. By so doing, he has set up the expectation and obligation that this individual now owes him something in return.⁵⁷ Martial does not make it clear whether he wrote the poem by commission or at his own instigation; it is not clear whether this distinction is important to him.⁵⁸

Epigrams 5.42 and 12.53 both underline another cardinal rule of giving (and a seemingly paradoxical one): that the only wealth that

⁵⁶ Martial usually names people whom he speaks well of and leaves anonymous those whom he is criticising and satirising. See Dominik (1999) 177.

⁵⁷ This 'something' could be anything from money to land to gifts to help with his writing career. See White (1978) 74–92; Saller (1983) 246–57; Sullivan (1991) 123–4 *et passim*. Saller (1983) 253 points out that, although no fee was set in advance (as far as we know), still that 'does not mean that a return was not expected and usually given'. Since paid labour was stigmatised, no poet wanted to admit to a direct exchange of cash for gift object (poem), but the *beneficia* that flowed in both directions were quite acceptable to everyone.

⁵⁸ Howell (1995) 119 suggests that, since Martial says that the man has cheated him, this would imply that the man did commission the poem. See also on the *ingratus homo* ('ungrateful man') as stock character Sullivan (1991) 118; Cic. *Off.* 1.47–9 (note in *Off.* 1.48 Cicero's reference to the *agros fertiles* ['fertile fields'] and cf. Mart. *Epigr.* 1.107.7–8 and above, 'Patronage'); Sen. *Ben.* 1.10.4; cf. Mart. *Epigr.* 5.19.8. See Mart. *Epigr.* 4.40 for another person (Postumus) whom Martial had laid in his debt and who deceived him by not repaying; cf. *inposuit* ('he cheated'), *Epigr.* 4.40.10; 5.36.2.

is certain to be in the giver's possession is the wealth that the giver bestows upon others:

callidus effracta nummos fur auferet arca,
 prosternet patrios impia flamma lares . . .
 extra fortunam est quidquid donatur amicis:
 quas dederis solas semper habebis opes.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 5.42.1–2, 7–8)

A clever thief will break into your safe and steal your money, irreverent fire will lay low your ancestral home. . . . Whatever is given to friends is beyond the reach of Fortune; the only thing that you will always own is what you give away.

nummi cum tibi sint opesque tantae
 quantas ciuis habet, Paterne, rarus,
 largiris nihil incubasque gazae . . .
 sed causa, ut memoras et ipse iactas,
 dirae filius est rapacitatis.
 ecquid tu fatuos ridesque quaeris
 inludas quibus auferasque mentem?
 huic semper uitio pater fuisti.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 12.53.1–3, 6–10)

Although you have the kind of money and wealth that only a few citizens possess, Paternus, you give nothing away and you brood over your wealth . . . but the reason, you say and keep saying, comes from wretched greed. Are you searching for fools and simpletons to cheat and rob of their judgment? You always have been the 'father' [Paternus] of this vice.

Fortune can ruin, take away or destroy everything else that you possess; only the gifts given away are safe. This is true not only because these gifts are safely out of your hands and in the keeping of another, but, more important, because they ensure an even larger return. The underlying theme of these two poems is that wealthy men should give, and are morally and culturally bound to give, as much as they possibly can, both to take their proper places as good patrons (*Epigrams* 12.53) and to ensure the proper continuity of the gift-exchange system. Finley points out that this kind of competitive giving was at the basis of the Homeric *xenia* system: 'gift-giving too was part of a network of competitive, honorific activity . . . one measure of a man's true worth was how much he could give away in treasure'.⁵⁹ Kurke

⁵⁹ Finley (1954) 129–30.

compares this kind of competitive giving to the potlatch ceremony of the Northwest Indians, in which the leading persons established their place in the hierarchy by giving away—or even destroying—as much as they could of their most valuable goods. She quotes Mauss as saying: ‘Nowhere else is the prestige of an individual as closely bound up with expenditure, and with the duty of returning with interest gifts received in such a way that the creditor becomes the debtor’.⁶⁰ In this context, Martial might well be playing off of the historical expectation of lavish returns (in gift-exchange cultures) to set out some rules for patrons in Flavian Rome.⁶¹

Finally, let us look at two poems about the great patron of the Augustan era and Martial’s main model, Maecenas, *Epigrams* 12.3 and 8.55. Martial idealises the glory days of patronage when men like Maecenas, Memmius, Piso and Seneca set the standard for what great patronage should be (12.36). In *Epigrams* 1.107, 8.55, 11.3 and 12.3, Maecenas receives praise for the gifts he gave to the great Augustan poets, Virgil and Horace (also mentioned are Varius and Marsus). Maecenas gave two (related) gifts to these poets: the gift of leisure (*otia*, ‘leisure’, 1.107.3, 11.3.2; *pigritiae*, ‘leisure’, 12.3.6) and the gift of money or other tangible gifts (*pingue solum*, ‘fertile soil’, 1.107.8; *paupertatem . . . malignam reppulit*, ‘He dispelled malignant poverty’, 8.55.9–10; *accipe diuitias et uatum maximus esto*, ‘Take riches and be the best of bards’, 8.55.11; *ditata . . . uatum/nomina*, ‘the names of poets enriched’, 8.55.21–2; *munera Maecenatis*, ‘gifts of a Maecenas’, 8.55.23; *quid prodest? nescit sacculus ista meus*, ‘What profit is there? My little purse knows nothing of that’, 11.3.6).⁶² Leisure (*otium*) is the main requisite of a good poet, the *sine qua non* for an inspired piece of work, and leisure is the direct result of other, more tangible gifts: money, precious objects (that could be sold), land or houses that could give the poet produce, food, a living, or a haven in which to

⁶⁰ Kurke (1991) 95–6; Mauss (1967) 35. See also the story about Appian’s embarrassingly lavish gift to Fronto, which put Fronto in the awkward position of having to one-up Appian (Haines [1919] 274–7). See White (1978) 87; Saller (1983) 254.

⁶¹ Martial complains that there has been a decline in the quality of patronage since the Pisos, Senecas, Memmiuses and Maecenases were active (*Epigr.* 1.107; 8.55; 11.3; 12.3; 12.36); cf. Pliny *Ep.* 3.21, who agrees. But Saller (1983) 255 points out the danger of accepting generalisations about trends of this sort. See Sullivan (1991) 124–5.

⁶² For Maecenas’ patronage of Virgil and Horace, see White (1978) 74–92; Santirocco (1986) 54–6, 95–6, 103–4, 153–68; Gold (1987) 3–4, 115–41 *et passim*; Bowditch (2001).

write (e.g., Horace's famous Sabine farm that allowed him a break from the bustle and duties of Rome and a quiet retreat, or Martial's Nomentan villa).⁶³

Epigrams 12.3 is addressed to one of his Spanish patrons, Terentius Priscus, who is the closest thing to a Maecenas for Martial (1-4). Priscus, for whom book 12 (or the nucleus of it) was written after Martial's return to Spain (12 *prae*f.),⁶⁴ gave to Martial the most precious gifts (and the final product of money and leisure): inspiration, ability to write, and a free man's leisure time; all these are necessary to produce great poetry:

quod Flacco Varioque fuit summoque Maroni
 Maecenas, ataus regibus ortus eques,
 gentibus et populis hoc te mihi, Prisce Terenti,
 fama fuisse loquax chartaque dicet anus.
 tu facis ingenium, tu, si quid posse uidemur;
 tu das ingenuae ius mihi pigritiae.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 12.3)

What Maecenas, a knight sprung from ancient kings, was to Horace and Varius and the great Virgil, talkative fame and old records will declare to all races and peoples that you, Priscus, have been to me. You create inspiration for me; you make possible whatever I seem to be able to accomplish; you give me the power of leisure that belongs to a free man.

Does this mean that Martial was capable, or thought he was capable, of writing great poetry? The mere mention of Maecenas, Horace and Virgil drives him to write a paradoxical *recusatio* in *Epigrams* 1.107 (and cf. 11.3.7-10):

saepe mihi dicis, Luci carissime Iuli,
 'scribe aliquid magnum: desidiosus homo es.'
 Otia da nobis, sed qualia fecerat olim
 Maecenas Flacco Vergilioque suo:
 Condere victuras temptem per saecula curas
 et nomen flammis eripuisse meum.
 in steriles nolunt campos iuga ferre iuveni:
 pingue solum lassat, sed iuvat ipse labor.

⁶³ For Martial's villa, see Sullivan (1991) 4. For gifts see Saller (1982) 123 and nn. 25-6.

⁶⁴ On Terentius Priscus and Martial's other Spanish patron, Marcella, see Hardie (1983) 56.

You often say to me, my friend Lucius Iulius, 'Write something great: you are a lazy person'. Give me leisure, the sort that Maecenas gave to his Horace and Virgil. Then I would try to produce writings that will live on through the ages and to rescue my name from the ashes. Oxen are not willing to carry the yoke into barren fields; a fertile soil tires but the work itself delights.

And, in a more perplexing and revealing poem, *Epigrams* 8.55, Martial plays Virgil for a few lines (7–20), exclaiming:

sint Maecenates, non derunt, Flacce, Marones
Vergiliumque tibi uel tua rura dabunt.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 8.55.5–6)

Let there be many Maecenases, Horace, and we shall not want for Virgils; even your own countryside will give you a Virgil.

But Martial has not said here that, if there are more Maecenases, *he* will be a Virgil, only that there will be more poets like Virgil. At the end of this poem, Martial asks his question explicitly and then answers it, with a surprise epigrammatic twist, in the negative:

ergo ego Vergilius, si munera Maecenatis
des mihi? Vergilius non ero, Marsus ero.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 8.55.23–4)

Shall I then be a Virgil, if you grant me the gifts of a Maecenas? I will not be a Virgil, I will be a Marsus.

While Domitius Marsus did write, among other things, satiric epigrams, was connected to Maecenas, and might have been a worthy model for Martial,⁶⁵ Martial calls him *levis* ('the lightweight', *Epigrams* 4.29.8), makes it clear that he occupies quite an inferior place to Virgil (5.5.5–8), and pairs him with Catullus but gives Catullus the epithet *doctus* ('learned') and leaves Marsus without qualifier (7.99.6–7). This then is a very peculiar and rather deflated ending to an important and almost bombastic poem. Martial seems here to be making fun of patronage and all its pretensions, and to be including even this subject, so dear to his heart, in the stuff of everyday life that he pokes fun at.

To return, then, to the discussion of Martial's construction of reality and subjectivity above (see 'Realism and Martial') and to the

⁶⁵ See Sullivan (1991) 97–9 on Domitius Marsus.

questions I have posed, Martial was a poet who was (pace Sullivan) highly aware of the larger issues surrounding patronage, poetry and power, and he was also, I would argue, very aware of his place in the historical continuum of the gift-exchange culture. He took the long view of what gifts had meant to his predecessors and what they could mean—both as signifiers and as objects—in his own day. He was not mired in, but rather he used the small and the particular to define the larger issues that were undeniably important to him on a daily basis, and he constructed, in an ironic, detached, and highly self-conscious way, a picture of the Client (himself) and the Patron (Domitian and others). His eye for detail and for the concrete tempts us to see—and has fooled many of his readers into seeing—Martial as a ‘realist’ who tells us what life at Rome was like on a daily basis. But, if we read his many poems on patronage of which I have given a small, representative sample above, for their deeper subtexts and for their larger picture, we see in them a writer who moves from the commodification and objectification of gifts to the subtler nuances of the process of a gift-exchange culture, creating as he goes a philosophy of giving. In so doing, he describes by his repeated self-definition how patronage worked in Flavian Rome.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ I am honoured to have been asked to contribute this article in place of Don Fowler, who was to have written it. I dedicate it to his memory.

23. READING THE IMPERIAL REVOLUTION:
MARTIAL, *EPIGRAMS* 10

Hannah Fearnley

Introduction: The Roman Reader

Ioculare tibi uidemur: et sane leui,
dum nil habemus maius, calamo ludimus.
sed diligenter intueri has nenias;
quantam in pusillis utilitatem reperiēs!
non semper ea sunt quae uidentur: decipit
frons prima multos, rara mens intellegit
quod interiore condidit cura angulo.

(Phaedrus, *Fabulae* 4.2.1–7)

I seem to you to be joking around: sure,
I play around with fickle pen, while I've no greater material.
But look carefully inside these trifles;
how much profit you will find in tiny things!
Things are not always as they seem: the exterior
deceives many; the rare mind understands
what the artist has hidden in the farthest corner.¹

Reading is a complex process. What appears clear immediately even to the most casual observer of imperial Rome is that the interconnective principle is both fundamental and overt in ancient reading practice. It is enshrined in Rome's monuments, embedded in its literary texts, immanent in its language. Latin word order forces the reader to generate meaning from the conjunction of separated signs. Quintilian, at the beginning of his twelve books on how to be an orator, quite positively stresses the interconnective principle in reading even as he underlines its fundamental role in a boy's primary education:

¹ All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own. Latin and Greek texts are translated line by line and are intended primarily to be of critical help to the reader.

Tunc ipsis syllabis uerba complecti et his sermonem connectere incipiat. Incredibile est, quantum morae lectioni festinatione adiciatur. . . . Certa sit ergo in primis lectio, deinde coniuncta et diu lentior, donec exercitatione contingat emendata uelocitas. Nam prospicere in dextrum (quod omnes praecipiant) et prouidere, non rationis modo sed usus quoque est; quoniam sequentia intuenti priora dicenda sunt, et, quod difficillimum est, diuidenda intentio animi, ut aliud uoce aliud oculis agatur.

(Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 1.1.31–4)

Then he can begin to construct words with these syllables and to string together sentences with these words. It is amazing how much reading is delayed when it is hurried. . . . Therefore, reading should be sure in the beginning, then connected, and slow for a long time until speed is achieved through practice and correcting one's mistakes. For to look to the right (as all are taught) and to look ahead, depends not so much on logic as practice. Since the first things are read out while looking at the following words, what is difficult is that the mind's focus is divided, so that the voice is led by one thing, the eyes by another.

The process of selection (*complecti*) and synthesis (*coniuncta*, *connectere*) is built into the Roman act of reading.² The Latin verb for reading, *legere*, necessarily involves the selection and compilation of words; the noun, *lectio*, reflects a similar intellectual involvement on the reader's part. Once the primary task of learning to read has been mastered, a *grammaticus* is necessary to teach how to interpret poets:

Haec igitur professio, cum breuissime in duas partes diuidatur, recte loquendi scientiam et poetarum enarrationem, plus habet in recessu quam fronte promittit. Nam et scribendi ratio coniuncta cum loquendo est, et enarrationem praecedit emendata lectio, et mixtum his omnibus iudicium est.

(Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 1.4.2–3)

Therefore this profession, which can be most concisely split into two parts (the art of speaking properly and the interpretation of poets), has more beneath the surface than appears on the outside. For the art of

² Lanchester (1996) 122 compares this process of selection and synthesis with a menu's culinary ingredients: 'This section will not consist of rigidly articulated menus as such. Rather, if the menu can be compared to a sentence—in which the individual syntactic units, nodes of energy, sabre thrusts, are connected by grammatical principles which link the units together, order and control the energy, choreograph and coordinate the individual moments of expression into a cohesive expression—then this chapter more closely resembles the individual lumps of psychic matter that precede the finished sentence. Instead of recipes and menus *per se* the reader will find suggestions for recipes, sparks flung from the wheel.'

writing is connected to the art of speaking, and correct reading precedes interpretation, but involved in all of these disciplines is critical judgement.

There is a clear progression in learning how to make texts mean; first, syllables are learned, then words are formed, next sentences are compiled, and finally the text is interpreted. Reading is interdisciplinary in that it cannot be separated from writing and speaking, and all three disciplines require intellectual discernment (*iudicium est*).³ When Quintilian discusses which authors should be read first, the most important skill required of boys is good 'judgement' (*iudiciis*, 2.5.23; *iudicium*, 2.5.26). The *grammaticus*' role is more important than at first meets the eye (*plus habet in recessu quam fronte promittit*, 1.4.2–3); he must teach the pupil how to internalise rules for reading so that he becomes a competent reader.⁴

The art of good reading requires the reader to understand a text on more than one level. Most of book 9 of Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* is devoted to tropes and *figurae*, which enable the author to write in a 'layered' way. The reader, who is taught to read parts of a text not in isolation but in terms of its whole,⁵ is alert to a multiplicity of meanings. The *figura* that Quintilian says is most popular at his time (the time at which Martial is writing) is *emphasis*:⁶

Est emphasis etiam inter figuras, cum ex aliquo dicto latens aliquid eruitur. . . . Huic uel confinis uel eadem est, qua nunc utimur plurimum.

³ These skills, once learned, remain fundamental to a Roman throughout his life: *Verum priora illa ad pueros magis, haec sequentia ad robustiores pertinebunt, cum grammatices amor et usus lectionis non scholarum temporibus, sed uitae spatio terminentur* ('But while the earlier remarks were more pertinent for boys, the following comments will be for the more mature, since the love of writing and the value of reading do not end with one's schooling but at the end of one's life', Quint. *Inst.* 1.8.12).

⁴ Culler's (1975) theory of reading is based on a basic notion of the reader's 'competence'. Culler (1975) 24 stresses the reader's role in deciphering textual codes to make the text mean: 'Man is not just *homo sapiens* but *homo significans*: a creature who gives sense to things'.

⁵ Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.20: *nec per partes modo scrutanda omnia, sed perlectus liber utique ex integro resumendus* ('Not only should each part be scrutinised, but the whole book should be read through as if taken up afresh once more').

⁶ *Emphasis* and 'figured' speech in Greek and Roman writers have been expertly and extensively dealt with by Ahl (1984a) 40–110; Ahl (1984b) 174–208. Ahl (1984b) 204, following Iser's precept (1974; 1978) to read a text within its context, concludes: 'If we were to read Greek and Roman literature of imperial times in terms of the techniques according to which it was composed, we would have a much better understanding—and higher opinion—of it'. I discuss the particular application of *emphasis* to Martial's text below.

Iam enim ad id genus, quod et frequentissimum est et exspectari maxime credo, ueniendum est, in quo per quandam suspicionem quod non dicimus accipi uolumus, non utique contrarium, ut in εἰρωνείᾳ sed aliud latens et auditori quasi inueniendum.

(Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 9.2.64–5)

Indeed *emphasis* is among the *figurae* when something hidden is dug up from some phrase. . . . Similar if not identical to this is a *figura*, which is now very popular. Now I come to that kind of *figura*, which I think is most popular, on which I think my comments are greatly awaited; that is the one in which we wish to incite a certain suspicion without actually saying it, not the opposite of what we want to say, as in the case of irony, but something hidden that is left to be discovered by the hearer.

Emphasis draws the reader's attention to what is said implicitly; the reader must dig (*eruitur*) to find something hidden (*aliud latens*) in the text. Such means of writing, as Ahl has cogently argued, were particularly useful for writers living under a tyrannical regime.⁷ Hence Quintilian's work closes with an address to careful, conscientious readers (*studiosis iuuenibus*, *Inst.* 12.11.31).⁸ It seems no accident that Quintilian and Martial, both writing under Domitian, an emperor renowned for his control of the written word, call for careful readers (cf. *lector studiosus*, Martial, *Epigr.* 1.1.4). Flavian Latin texts presume complex rules for reading and require textually perceptive readers.

But the Roman reader was also an *inter-textual* reader; he read both literary text against literary text, but also literary text against physical monument and political act. The monuments of imperial Rome presume a hermeneutic sensibility; Roman architecture, relief work and portraiture require the observer to synthesise distactic images and symbols and to construct a narrative from them. The example *par excellence* is the Forum of Augustus,⁹ an iconographic justification of Augustus' right to rule. The forum is structured through a carefully constructed system of images that invites the observer to make connections between the statues flanking the forum (Aeneas and the Julian family on the left, Romulus and the kings of Rome

⁷ Ahl (1984a) 40–110; Ahl (1984b) 174–208.

⁸ The importance of re-reading and digesting what has been read is discussed at Quintilian, *Institutio* 10.1.19.

⁹ On the Forum of Augustus, see von Blanckenhagen (1954) 22; Anderson (1984) 65–100; Zanker (1988) 79–89.

on the right) and the emperor Augustus. The forum is an ideological representation of power: the four-horse triumphal chariot at the forum's centre, given to Augustus by the senate along with the title of *pater patriae* in 2 BCE, is emblematic of Augustus' attempt to locate himself at the centre of Roman myth, religion and history.

The massive scale of Domitian's equestrian statue erected in the Forum Romanum is emblematic of the extent to which political power and propaganda manifests itself in Flavian Rome.¹⁰ When confronted by Domitian's palace on the Palatine, the Roman observer realised that this was not merely a house on a hill but a statement of imperial power. When he walked through the Forum Transitorium, the topographical layout of the imperial fora forced him to make connections between Domitian, Augustus and Iulius Caesar.¹¹ The Roman observer did not only focus on individual structures just as the Roman reader did not read a text in isolation. Martial's text needs to be read as an integral part of Flavian Rome.

Martial, Epigrams 10

Martial is a political poet.¹² *Epigrams* 10, initially written early in 96 CE but hastily withdrawn and rewritten in 98 CE after the assassination of Domitian,¹³ is an overt example of the precarious relationship of poetry and political power in the first century CE. In its rewritten format, *Epigrams* 10 is a carefully crafted collection and one in which Martial is highly self-reflective about both the nature of his verse and the environment in which he lives and writes. My purpose is to address Martial's relationship to the political climate in the years 96–98 CE to see what can be deduced about the poet's

¹⁰ The statue, the topic of Statius' *Silvae* 1.1, is discussed by Ahl (1984a) 91–6. The statue may be represented on a *sestertius* of 95 CE. See Hill (1989) 66–71.

¹¹ On the relationship between the fora of Augustus and Domitian, see von Blanckenhagen (1954) 21–6; Anderson (1982) 101–12; D'Ambra (1993) 33–5.

¹² Cf. Boyle (1995a) 256: 'Martial's poetry is political in the strongest sense: it is both product of, and agent for, very specific forms of social and moral structure'.

¹³ Martial tells us this at the beginning of *Epigrams* 10: *Festinata prius, decimi mihi cura libelli/elapsum manibus nunc reuocauit opus./nota leges quaedam sed lima rasa recenti;/pars noua maior erit* ('In composing my tenth book, the work that slipped too hastily from my hands earlier, has now been recalled. You will read some epigrams that you know already, some polished with a recent file; the greater part will be new', 10.2.1–4).

reaction to the political upheaval of the time.¹⁴ Martial uses the book as medium to express his relationship with Rome and political power. It is a relationship that has changed by 98 CE.¹⁵ In 98 CE Martial's vision is no longer at the centre of Rome, there is little hope of imperial patronage, and the focus shifts to Martial, not as Roman satirist, but to Martial the Spaniard, Martial who has been away from home for a long time and is now (almost) ready to return. In its format and sentiment *Epigrams* 10 is cyclical; it begins with a discussion of the book as a second edition, it ends with a farewell to the book embarking on a boat for Spain. Martial remains in Rome but the book looks both backwards and forwards: back to when Martial first came to Rome and forward to his imminent departure. This is the only Martial book in which the poet stops and takes stock of his past and his future. It is a book in which he defines the nature of his verse most and in which he talks directly about his political environment least. The Martial of *Epigrams* 10 is a poet divided between home and Rome.

Martial writes through the reigns of Titus, Domitian, Nerva and Trajan, and his epigrams resound the political situation that produced them. *De Spectaculis* in 80 CE coincides with Titus' opening of the Flavian Amphitheatre; *Epigrams* 1 to 9 coincide with Domitian's campaigns against the Dacians, Sarmatians and the Chatti;¹⁶ *Epigrams* 11 coincides with Nerva's accession in 96 CE; *Epigrams* 12 follows Martial's retirement to Spain after 101 CE. *Epigrams* 10 is a misfit. Written in 96 CE and then rewritten in 98 CE, we can infer from his comment 'a greater part will be new' (*pars noua maior erit*, 10.2.4) that much material associated with Domitian needed to be replaced. In *Epigrams*

¹⁴ I take my cue from the comment of Sullivan (1991) 48 on the political nature of *Epigrams* 10: 'The political emphasis of the book is to be seen in the reiterated prayers for Trajan's return from the Rhineland and the highly approving comments on his actions and behaviour (*Epigr.* 10.6, 7, 34, 72, 101). The underscoring of the poet's own reputation is linked to these attempts to ingratiate himself with the new government.' This seems to me an unsatisfactory explanation. The epigrams on Trajan are few and these do more to stress Trajan's absence from Rome and Martial's dissatisfaction with the political scene. The last thing Martial seems to be doing in this book is trying to 'ingratiate himself with the new government'. Rather, the few political poems, combined with Martial's increased focus on Spain in this book, seem to illustrate Martial's attempts to get away from the political scene in Rome.

¹⁵ My reading will thus incorporate material from *Epigrams* 9, 10, 11 and 12.

¹⁶ For Domitian's campaigns against the Dacians, Sarmatians and Chatti, see Jones (1992) 126–59.

10.72 Martial explicitly states that a change in emperor requires a change in discourse, and he talks about new codes of reading and writing after the assassination and *damnatio memoriae* of Domitian:

Frustra, Blanditiae, uenitis ad me
atritis miserabiles labellis:
dicturus dominum deumque non sum.
iam non est locus hac in urbe uobis;
ad Parthos procul ite pilleatos
et turpes humilesque supplicesque
pictorum sola basiate regum.
non est hic dominus, sed imperator,
sed iustissimus omnium senator,
per quem de Stygia domo reducta est
siccis rustica Veritas capillis.
hoc sub principe, si sapis, caueto
uerbis, Roma, prioribus loquaris.

In vain, Flatteries, do you come to me
wretched with worn out lips:
I am not about to speak of the lord and god.
Now there is no place for you in this city;
Go off to the liberty-capped Parthians,
and you shameful, lowly suppliants
kiss the soles of painted kings.
There is no lord here, but an *imperator*,
the most just *senator* of all,
through whom rustic Truth with dry hair
has been led back from the home of the Styx.
Under this *princeps*, if you are wise, Rome,
beware of speaking with former language.

I will return to this epigram below. Since there are only four epigrams that address Trajan in the book,¹⁷ it becomes less easy to read *Epigrams* 10 as a manifestation of and comment upon the political situation of any one year. As a result, this book has been much neglected and Martial's silence about the political change in 98 CE reflects the silence in scholarship that the book has received.¹⁸ It is

¹⁷ Trajan is referred to in *Epigrams* 10.6, 7, 34, 72. Sullivan (1994) 98 includes *Epigrams* 10.101 (quoted below) but the reference to Caesar is deliberately ambiguous here.

¹⁸ Sullivan (1991) 44–52 provides the most detailed discussion of this book. He acknowledges that *Epigrams* 10 is 'one of the best of Martial's books . . . and carefully

important that we understand the implications of the rewriting of *Epigrams* 10 and read the books not in the order in which they are now, but *Epigrams* 9, then 11, then 10, then 12. In this order, after the prominence of Domitian in *Epigrams* 9 and the extensive treatment of Nerva in the opening cycle of *Epigrams* 11, Martial's silence about Trajan in *Epigrams* 10 is deafening.

In order to understand better the treatment of Trajan and Trajanic Rome in *Epigrams* 10, it is necessary to examine Martial's preceding treatment of emperor and city. The majority of Martial's epigrammatic composition took place during Domitian's reign and Martial's treatment of the lord and god becomes most extensive and overt in *Epigrams* 9.¹⁹ Cycles on Domitian's revival of legal, moral and religious reforms, and his extensive architectural projects ground the book in the city of Rome. An appreciation of these cycles within the context of the book better informs Martial's representation of Domitian.²⁰ The nature of absolute power makes subversive literature and anti-establishment comment dangerous, and 'figured' speech becomes imperative if a writer is to survive his own writing. Quintilian, as noted above, discusses the popularity (*nunc utimur plurimum*, *Inst.* 9.2.65) of *emphasis* at this time—the importance of making sense of what is not said, that which may be deliberately omitted, as well as what is explicitly stated or subtly alluded to. Epigram is a particularly appropriate genre for *emphasis*, as it enables the author to juxtapose epigrams that may seem to have contradictory meaning or to allow one epigram to be undermined by the next. Exploitation of the epigrammatic form in this way enables Martial to encode the book as a whole. What at first sight had seemed like panegyric is revealed as bitter criticism, or at least heavy irony.

Encoding functions prominently in two areas in *Epigrams* 9: Domitian's moral legislation and his building program. Garthwaite's work on this book shows how the superficially serious epigrams on Domi-

crafted'. He discusses the most salient themes of the book and gives details on the political background from 96 to 98 CE.

¹⁹ For the ambiguous connotations of the phrase, see Dominik (1994b) 58–60. Dominik says that though poets use this phrase it 'did not necessarily imply belief in (such a ridiculous notion as) an emperor's divinity'; he uses as evidence Martial's rejection of the phrase in *Epigrams* 10.72. On the phrase *dominus et deus* in literature, see also Scott (1936) 102–12.

²⁰ Garthwaite (1990) 13–22; Garthwaite (1993) 78–101; Fowler (1995) 31–58; Boyle (1995a) 250–69; Howell (1980); and Howell (1995) stress the importance of reading each Martial book as an intratextual unit.

tian's moral legislation are undercut by the poems with which they are juxtaposed and thus reveal the hypocrisy of the emperor.²¹ In isolation, the epigrams that treat Domitian's implementation of the castration law (9.5, 7) praise the legislation of the emperor. However, these are followed by a cycle (9.11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 36) on Earinus, Domitian's boy-lover, who is specifically characterised as a castrated catamite. Domitian clearly does not abide by his own rules.²² The other area in which Martial's encoding reveals Domitian's hypocrisy, is building. *Epigrams* 9 is firmly rooted in the architectural ideology of Domitianic Rome and celebrates many of Domitian's monuments: the temple in honour of the Gens Flavia (9.1, 34, 93), the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus (9.3), the Temple of Hercules (9.64) and the enormous palace on the Palatine (9.91).²³ The fanatical excessiveness of such building activity, indicated by Martial's frequent references to Domitian as Augustus 'the Increaser' (*Epigr.* 4.27; 5.15; 9.3, 18, 34, 79), is satirised in *Epigrams* 9 through the figures of Gellius and Pastor:²⁴

Credis ob haec me, Pastor, opes fortasse rogare
 propter quae populus crassaque turba rogat . . .
 est nihil ex istis: superos et sidera testor.
 ergo quid? ut donem, Pastor, et aedificem.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 9.22.1–2, 15–16)

Perhaps you think, Pastor, that I ask for wealth
 for the same reasons as the crowd and mass mob . . .
 No, for none of these reasons: the gods and stars are witnesses.
 What then? That I might give *and* build.

Martial's criticism of Pastor is that he uses the excuse that he is always building when asked for money by a client, a complaint that Martial could easily have of the emperor. Martial makes his feelings about Domitian's hypocrisy explicit in *Epigrams* 12, calling his architectural extravaganzas *superbi regis delicias grauesque luxus* ('the delights

²¹ Garthwaite (1993) 78–101. Garthwaite (1990) 13–22 approaches *Epigrams* 6 in a similar way; there, the reading of cycles and juxtaposed poems reflect the hypocrisy of Domitian's moral censorship.

²² For a fuller analysis of this cycle, see Garthwaite (1993) 13–22.

²³ On the architectural semiotics in Martial, see my PhD dissertation: Fearnley (1998) 138–159. For a list of buildings erected, restored, completed by and attributed to Domitian, see Jones (1992) 79–98.

²⁴ For the epigram on Gellius, see *Epigrams* 9.46.

and oppressive luxuries of a haughty monarch', 12.15.4–5), a phrase that rewrites Martial's earlier panegyric of Titus' colossal amphitheatre, the *deliciae populi* ('delights of the people', *Spect.* 2.12). The recontextualisation of the word *deliciae* points up the instability and slippage inherent in all imperial discourse. If, as *Epigrams* 10.72 suggests, when the emperor dies, language inverts, what truth-value does language possess when the emperor lives?

A newly permitted freedom under the new emperor, Nerva, is expressed in *Epigrams* 11.²⁵ The initial unit (1–6) of *Epigrams* 11 is overtly political and Martial establishes himself immediately within the social and topographical space of Nerva's Rome.²⁶ The dedicatory address to Parthenius in *Epigrams* 11.1 is a declaration of allegiance; Parthenius was almost certainly involved in the plot to kill Domitian and so by addressing him here at the beginning of the book Martial associates himself with the new regime. Parthenius was Martial's link with the imperial court; he had often been asked to function as a go-between under Domitian and is now Martial's hope of access to Nerva, remaining so until his death in 97 CE.²⁷ Martial's hope for imperial patronage has clearly not diminished, in fact he may have thought that Nerva would be especially favourable to poets since he was a poet himself, addressed by Martial as the Tibullus of the time.²⁸ This hope is made explicit in *Epigrams* 11.3, where Martial

²⁵ As Kay (1983) 1 notes, *Epigrams* 11 can be fairly precisely dated to December 96 CE: Martial exploits the fact that the book was issued at the time of the *Saturnalia* (which started on 17 December); praises the accession of Nerva (18 September 96 CE); and addresses Parthenius (who was dead by the middle of 97 CE) in *Epigrams* 11.1.1.

²⁶ Kay (1983) 5 points out that the book has a well-defined beginning and ending, and labels the first unit of six epigrams as 'opening epigrams.'

²⁷ Parthenius is addressed at *Epigrams* 4.45; 5.6; 8.28; 11.1; 12.11. As Kay rightly states (1983) 53: 'For Martial to address a poem to him (Parthenius), hardly six months after Domitian's death, is a political act, a sign of his allegiance to the new regime'. Jones (1992) 193–6 speculates on the involvement of Parthenius and others in Domitian's assassination.

²⁸ *Epigrams* 8.70.1, 7–8: *Quanta quies placidi tanta est facundia Neruae . . . sed tamen hunc nostri scit temporis esse Tibullum/carmina qui docti nota Neronis habet*, 'Mellow Nerva is as eloquent as he is peaceful. . . . Whoever knows the songs of learned Nero knows that Nerva is the Tibullus of our time.' His fondness for poetry is alluded to at *Epigrams* 9.26.1–2: *Audet facundo qui carmina mittere Neruae, / pallida donabit glaucina, Cosme, tibi*, 'He who dares to send songs to eloquent Nerva, will give you pale glaucine, Cosmus.' Pliny (*Ep.* 5.3.5), in defence of his own less serious writing says that Nerva liked obscene poetry and wrote it himself.

refers to Nerva as *Augustus*, invoking the official title of Augustus that Nerva took (Frontin. *Aq.* 93; *CIL* 6.95–6), and hoping that, just as in the Golden Age, there might be a new Maecenas to provide patronage for poets.

The freedom of Nerva's reign is evoked by the carefree setting of the *Saturnalia*, during which the book was intended to be published.²⁹ Ideas of freedom are evoked through the book that is 'on holiday' (*otiosus*, *Epigr.* 11.1.1), its *otiosi* audience (11.1.10), and the city of Rome that is itself a manumitted slave (*pilleata*, 11.6.4). Poetic license justifies an increase of obscenity in this book:

clamant ecce mei 'Io Saturnalia' uersus:
et licet et sub te praeside, Nerua, libet.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 11.2.5–6)

Look, my verses shout, 'Io *Saturnalia*':

It is both permitted under your rule, Nerva, and a pleasure.

The idea of liberty is further reinforced by the structure of the line where verbs of poetic freedom and contentment surround the name of the emperor. The *libertas* of *Epigrams* 11 is exemplified by the predominance of sexual humour, which varies widely in tone from the erotic to the satiric to invective. In this book, Martial gives a representative list of topics typical of satire: adultery, pederasty, circumcision, masturbation, impotence, oral sex, ugly women, foul genitalia, frigidity, prostitution, nights of drunken revelry. Martial's contemplation of a 'loose' woman in *Epigrams* 11.21 exemplifies this:

Lydia tam laxa est equitis quam culus aeni,
quam celer arguto qui sonat aere trochus,
quam rota transmisso totiens intacta petauero,
quam vetus a crassa calceus udus aqua,
quam quae rara vagos expectant retia turdos,
quam Pompeiano vela negata Noto,

²⁹ On the bawdy nature of the *Saturnalia*, which lasted for five days by Nerva's time, see Kay (1983) 71. Richlin (1992a) 2 analyses Martial's use of the *Saturnalia* (quoting *Epigr.* 11.15.11–13: *uersus hos tamen esse tu memento/Saturnalicios, Apollinaris:/mores non habet hic meos libellus*, 'Remember, Apollinaris, that these are Saturnalian verses: this *libellus* does not have my morals.') in the context of the *apologia*; the setting allows Martial to dissociate himself from the obscene subject matter of his work. Her analysis ignores the fact that the Saturnalian context typifies the whole book and is particularly resonant in this book because of the political propaganda associated with Nerva's accession.

quam quae de pthisico lapsa est armilla cinaedo,
 culcita Leuconico quam viduata suo,
 quam veteres braciae Brittonis pauperis, et quam
 turpe Ravennatis guttur onocrotali.
 hanc in piscina dicor fuisse marina.
 nescio; piscinam me fuisse puto.

Lydia is as wide and slack
 As a bronze horse's cul-de-sac,
 Or sounding hoop with copper rings,
 Or board from which an athlete springs,
 Or swollen shoe from muddy puddle,
 Or net of thrushes in a huddle,
 Or awning that won't stay outspread,
 In Pompey's theatre, overhead,
 Or bracelet that, at every cough,
 From a consumptive poof slips off,
 French cushion, where the stuffing leaks,
 Poor Breton's knackered, baggy breeks,
 Foul pelican-crop, Ravenna-bred!
 Now there's a rumour-he who said
 I had her in the fish-pond joked;
 It was the pond itself I poked.³⁰

The *libertas* expressed by the implied Saturnalian setting of the book is reinforced by the political freedom exhibited on the coins of 96 CE by the motto *libertas publica* and by the famous inscription, *libertas restituta* (ILS 274), erected on the Capitol by S.P.Q.R. and dated to 18 September 96 CE, the day of Nerva's accession.³¹ The liberty associated with Nerva in historical sources is recorded not only in Martial, where Nerva is associated with the *libertas* of Camillus (*Epigr.* 11.5.7), but in other literary works such as Pliny's *Epistulae* (*Ac primis quidem diebus redditae libertatis*, 'In the early days of restored liberty', *Ep.* 9.13.4) and Tacitus' *Agricola* (*Nunc demum redit animus; et quamquam primo statim beatissimi saeculi ortu Nerua Caesar res olim dissociabiles miscuerit, principatum ac libertatem*, 'Now at last, spirit returns; from the

³⁰ Translated by O. Pitt-Kethley (with indented lines added), in Sullivan (1987) 423.

³¹ Waters (1969) 394 stresses a definite break between Nerva's coinage and that of Domitian and Trajan. He argues that Nerva's coinage urged public support through types such as LIBERTAS PUBLICA, ROMA RENASCENS, FORTUNA P.R., AEQUITAS and IUSTITIA. For the coinage of Nerva's reign, see *RIC* 2.220–33.

beginning of his most happy age, Nerva Caesar has immediately merged things once incompatible, the principate and liberty,' *Ag.* 3.1), where the return to liberty marks the beginning of his reign.³² Martial's labelling of Nerva as *dux* ('leader') and *princeps* ('first citizen') in *Epigrams* 11.4 stands in contrast with his labelling of Domitian as *dominus* ('master') and *deus* ('god') throughout the earlier books. Just as *Epigrams* 10.72 compares the Domitianic and Trajanic reigns, a deliberate antithesis is expressed in *Epigrams* 12 between the autocracy that Domitian represented and the freedom of Nerva's reign:

contigit Ausoniae procerum mitissimus aulae
 Nerva: licet tuto nunc Helicone frui:
 recta fides, hilaris clementia, cauta potestas
 iam redeunt; longi terga dedere metus.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 12.5.3–6)

Now the most gentle of leaders has reached the Ausonian palace—
 Nerva: now it is permitted to enjoy Helicon in safety:
 True loyalty, smiling clemency and cautious power
 now return; the Reign of Terror has gone.

Licet again evokes the freedom of Nerva's reign. The faith, clemency and cautious power contrast with the fearful nature of Domitian's reign and the latter's implied lack of tyranny.

The poetic freedom associated with Nerva's reign is carefully balanced by the depiction of Nerva as a traditional leader of a city rooted firmly in traditional Roman values. In *Epigrams* 11.4 Nerva is addressed as a second Aeneas who has erected a golden statue of Jupiter and paid reverence to the *lares* and sacred artefacts of Troy.³³ In *Epigrams* 11.5 he is placed alongside Numa, Camillus, Fabricius, Sulla, Pompey, Caesar, Crassus and Cato for his reverence. Martial establishes himself within the topography of this city; the *otiosi* can

³² An interesting contrast is with Pliny's description of *libertas* under Trajan: *Iubes esse liberos, erimus; iubes quae sentimus promere in medium, proferemus* ('You command us to be free, and we shall be free; you order us to express ourselves, and we shall do so', *Pan.* 66.4). In evoking the freedom associated with Trajan's reign, Pliny draws attention to the fact that *libertas* is enjoyed at the emperor's ordering. As Wirszubski (1968) 171 remarks: 'It would take more than Pliny's rhetoric to conceal the fact that his *Panegyricus* marked the surrender of constitutional freedom.'

³³ *Epigr.* 11.4.1–2: *Sacra lares Phrygum quos Troiae maluit heres/quam rapere arsuras Laomedontis opes* ('The rites and the Phrygian *lares* which the Trojan heir preferred to rescue as Laomedon's wealth was about to go up in flames'). As Kay notes (1983) 66, the rhythm suggests the first line of the *Aeneid*.

find him in the Portico of Quirinus (11.1.9).³⁴ This is a significant location for two reasons. The Portico of Quirinus is near Martial's house and so he locates his poetry reading in his own part of town; but also, the reference to Quirinus, the deified founder of the Roman race, supports Martial's representation of Nerva as a traditional leader. Martial thus aligns himself and his poetry with the ideology of Nerva's reign.

Epigrams 10.72, therefore, needs to be considered in the context of *Epigrams* 10 and as sequel to *Epigrams* 11. Martial says that no longer will he speak with *uerba priora* ('a former language', 10.72.13) and that discernment is now needed (*si sapias*, 10.72.12) when articulating imperial power. From *Epigrams* 9 and 11 we can see that he certainly changed the language with which he spoke, evoking the freedom of speech that he claims was absent under Domitian. But what does it mean that Martial makes this statement in 98 CE, and what is the language he uses to speak of Trajan? He does not define the kind of language with which he will *now* speak; if anything, the change of *dominus et deus* to *imperator* and *senator* draws attention, as I suggested earlier, to imperial discourse as unstable, even empty verbiage. He tells the Blanditiae to go off to the *pilleati Parthi*, the freed Parthians, yet he had called Rome *pilleata* in *Epigrams* 11.6.4. Why is it that the Parthians, who had for so long been the only substantial power anywhere in the world threatening Rome, are now called *pilleati*, and does this imply that Rome is no longer free? The fact that this epigram is written in hendecasyllabics, the quintessential mode of the politically irreverent Catullus, might itself suggest that this writing is coded. And then there is the 'rusticity' of truth. Martial says that 'rustic Truth' (10.72.11) has returned from the Styx. *Rusticus* is an adjective usually used in antithesis to *urbanus* and can mean 'of the countryside, simple' in a good sense or 'clownish', 'simple' in an unsophisticated way.³⁵ In *Epigrams* 10.101 Martial addresses Gabba, Augustus' court jester, as *rustice*:

³⁴ The *porticus Quirini* was on the north side of the Alta Semita on the Quirinal: Platner and Ashby (1929) 438. Martial mentions this area as his neighbourhood at *Epigrams* 10.53.10: *uicinosque tibi, sancte Quirine, lares*.

³⁵ The adjective *rusticus* occurs three times in *Epigrams* 10; here, in *Epigrams* 10.72 and 10.101, and in its diminutive form, *rusticulus*, at *Epigrams* 10.20.2: *Nec doctum satis et parum seuerum, / sed non rusticulum tamen libellum / facundo mea Plinio Thalia / i perfer* ('Go, my Thalia, take to eloquent Pliny a *libellus*, not very learned and not very serious, but still not countrified, 10.20.1–4'). Here, Martial seems to be implying that his book is not yet associated with the world of the *rus*, but perhaps anticipates its journey to the *rus* at the end of the book.

Elysio redeat si forte remissus ab agro
 ille suo felix Caesare Gabba uetus,
 qui Capitolinum pariter Gabbamque iocantes
 audierit, dicet: 'rustice Gabba, tace.'

(Martial, *Epigrams* 10.101)

If that old Gabba, happy in his Caesar,
 should by chance come back from the Elysium field,
 anyone who heard Capitolinus and Gabba joking together
 would say, 'Rustic Gabba, keep quiet.'

Here Martial seems to mean both senses; Gabba is 'clownish' but also 'country-like', possessing values associated with the world of the *rus*. In Trajan's Rome, Gabba, and by implication that world, must now be silent. If truth is *rusticus*, as *Epigrams* 10.72 proclaims, how compatible can it be with the new imperial *urbs*? What both *rusticus* and the Gabba paradigm suggest, is that truth and Trajanic Rome may be incompatible.

With Trajan declared emperor while in Cologne and *Epigrams* 10 reissued in the same year, Martial had little hope of winning favour with the emperor. In *Epigrams* 10.34 Martial addresses Trajan and praises him for returning a patron's rights to him while still in exile:

Di tibi dent quidquid, Caesar Traiane, mereris
 et rata perpetuo quae tribuere velint:
 qui sua restituis spoliato iura patrono
 —libertis exul non erit ille suis—,
 dignus es ut populum possis seruare clientem,
 ut—liceat tantum uera probare—potes.

May the gods give you, Caesar Trajan, whatever you deserve
 and may they wish their gifts to be ratified eternally:
 You, who restore his rights to the despoiled patron
 —he will not be an exile to his own freedmen—
 you are worthy of being able to keep the people as your client,
 as—may it be permitted only to approve the truth—you're able.

The vocabulary, syntax and sentiment of this epigram are complex and awkward; the hierarchy is set up whereby the gods grant the emperor what he deserves and in turn the emperor is worthy of being patron to the people of Rome. In his role as patron, Trajan has restored an exiled patron's rights over his freedmen. This means that, though the patron is exiled from Rome, he will still have control over his ex-slaves. But the attention to the language of exile and free, despoilment and restoration, serves only to remind us that

Trajan is not freeing the exiles, that is, restoring them to Rome, he is merely restoring their patronal rights and leaving the *patroni* themselves in exile. Vitellius had both restored the exiles to Rome and returned their rights over their freedmen,³⁶ but to restore these rights while still in exile, seems a hollow, even cynical political gesture. The language of panegyric seems problematised by the behaviour praised. Similarly, while the epigram prays that Trajan be a deserving emperor ('May the gods give Trajan *whatever he deserves* . . .) and resounds with Trajanic potential (*dignus es, possis, potes*), the final statement, 'May it be permitted only to approve the truth', rings with uncertainty. This may be due to Trajan's absence from Rome and Martial's apprehension of an emperor feared to be a continuation of Domitian.³⁷ In *Epigrams* 10.72 Martial had declared that 'rustic Truth' had returned, but here *liceat* ('may it be permitted', *Epigr.* 10.34.6) implies that freedom to speak the truth is still hoped for and contrasts with the repetition of *licet* ('it is permitted') that had characterised the epigrams of Nerva. The other two epigrams that address Trajan, *Epigrams* 10.6 and 10.7, stress Trajan's absence from Rome; in *Epigrams* 10.6 the repetition of *quando* ('When, when, when, will Trajan return?') only reinforces his absence, and similarly, in *Epigrams* 10.7, the prayer is for Trajan's return from the Rhine (*Traianum populis suis et urbi/Thybris te dominus rogat, remittas, Epigr.* 10.7.8–9). In Martial, Trajan's only presence is an absence, and an imperial absence that controls the present discourse.

One poetic consequence of this absent presence is Martial's silence about Trajanic Rome. And silence can be a token of oppression. Martial proclaims that 'silence is free' (*constare gratis . . . silentium*) at

³⁶ See Tacitus *Hist.* 2.92: *Gratum primoribus ciuitatis etiam plebs adprobauit, quod reuersis ab exilio iura libertorum concessisset* ('What was pleasing to the highest citizens, and of which even the *plebs* approved, was that which gave those who returned from exile rights over their freedmen').

³⁷ Waters (1969) 1 convincingly argues that 'Trajan and Domitian were committed to an almost identical policy. That policy was one of increased autocracy.' His evidence illustrates continuity and similarity in many areas of each emperor's activity: continuity in the sphere of imperial advisers and public administrators; a similar pattern of abstract images on coinage and assimilation of the emperor to a god; similar military and foreign policies, exemplified by the Dacian campaigns; continuity of self-advertisement through great building projects; similar interest in agriculture, especially in Italy. This fear of Trajan's continuation of autocracy may be reflected in Cassius Dio's comment (68.3.21) that Calpurnius conspired against Nerva. The reason for this is given in Zonaras (11.20); the adoption of Trajan was seen as a return to the military despotism of Domitian.

Epigrams 10.3.12. Is to speak then costly or unsafe? The issue of the conditions for safe speech comes into prominence after Domitian's death, and Tacitus' *Agricola*, contemporary with the publication of the second edition of *Epigrams* 10, expressly notes how philosophers had to keep silent through the reign of terror.³⁸ Martial claims that his silence is for fear of earning a bad reputation for himself. It was, perhaps, futile for Martial to address an absent emperor. But silence may also have more profound political meaning. Ahl examines Aeschylus' use of Cassandra's silence for dramatic effect:³⁹

Her silence becomes an issue in the play. Her failure to respond both vocally or physically now appears to be a statement in itself, an act of defiance. . . . Aeschylus' watchman and his Cassandra, not to mention the myth of Procne and Philomela, are reminders that fear does not suppress communication. Rather it limits and redefines communication.

Martial's silence also tells us something political. There are only four epigrams in the tenth book that address Trajan and none of these are at the opening of the book. But Martial's silence is not just a rejection of the emperor; it is a rejection of the city's imperial ideology of which he had been the exemplary commentator in previous books.

³⁸ For the dating of Tacitus' *Agricola*, see Ogilvie and Richmond (1967) 10: 'That the *Agricola* was written shortly after Domitian's death is plain from its whole character. A more exact date can be obtained only from references in it to Nerva and Trajan. In *Agricola* 3.1 Nerva is mentioned as Nerva Caesar without being called *diuus* while Trajan, called Nerva Traianus, is described as 'daily increasing the happiness of our times'; whence it has been inferred that Tacitus was writing when Nerva was still alive but after he had adopted Trajan as his son and made him *socius imperii* ('an ally of the empire'), that is, between October 97 CE and 28 January 98 CE, when Nerva died. On the other hand, in *Agricola* 44.5 Trajan is spoken of as *princeps*, which shows that he was already emperor and that Nerva was dead. It is possible that in the former passage Tacitus has merely omitted to style Nerva *diuus* ('divine') and that the inference that Nerva was still alive is false, but it is perhaps more likely that the work was begun in the late autumn of 97 CE and not completed until the spring of 98 CE. The *Agricola* is important in discussing the political conditions in which it is safe to speak. The eulogies written by Arulenus Rusticus and Herennius Senecio were burnt in the Forum. Tacitus conveys how Domitian attempted to rob authors of their 'voice' (*uox*): *dedimus profecto grande patientiae documentum; et sicut uetus aetas uidit quid ultimum in libertate esset, ita nos quid in seruitute, adempto per inquisitiones etiam loquendi audiendique commercio. memoriam quoque ipsam cum uoce perdidissemus, si tam in nostra potestate esset obliuisci quam tacere* ('Certainly we have given great proof of submissiveness; and just as an olden age saw extreme liberty, so we see extreme slavery, deprived even, through espionage, of the intercourse of speech and hearing. We would have lost memory as well as voice, if forgetfulness had been in our power as much as silence', *Agr.* 2.3). For a discussion of Thrasea Paetus and Helvidius Priscus as assertors of *libertas*, see Wirszubski (1968) 138–50.

³⁹ Ahl (1984b) 182.

It is no accident, for example, that Martial's detachment from the urban scene coincides with his decision to return to Spain. This movement from Rome to Spain is heightened with the progression of *Epigrams* 10 as Martial becomes increasingly preoccupied with himself as a Spaniard in Rome, with his friends who are leaving Rome, and finally with his own decision to leave. Of course there remain many of the standard satirical themes in this book, but this does not detract from Martial's increased focus on Spain.⁴⁰ In the first third of the book Martial details the draining effect of Rome and the fact that the city does not afford time for pleasure, especially with friends in the countryside; Martial tells Domitius that he will be handsome as long as he is absent from the 'urban yoke' of Rome but that the pallid throng will rob him of his colour when he returns.⁴¹ Martial longs to revisit a Spanish friend from his youth in Salo, commenting that 'Rome can be anywhere for two friends' (*in quocumque loco Roma duobus erit*, 10.13.10). Rome is the town of stern Mars (*oppidum seueri Martis*, 10.30.2) and though Apollinaris desires to go to Formiae, Martial asks when Rome permits this (*frui sed istis quando, Roma, permittis?*, 10.30.25). The implied answer 'Never' contrasts sharply with the sense of freedom evoked in *Epigrams* 11. In the middle third of the book Martial reflects on whether the bustle of the city merits living there: in *Epigrams* 10.51 it is debated whether Faustinus' hectic life among the theatres, temples and baths of Rome is better than the tunic-clad repose afforded by Faustinus' hometown (the city is told to keep to itself);⁴² in *Epigrams* 10.58 Martial complains that the

⁴⁰ Weinrib (1990) 163 states: 'Arriving at a late hour in the fortunes of the younger Seneca, M. Valerius Martialis from Bilbilis quickly established contact with the illustrious literary family from Corduba. After the eclipse of the Annaei the ties persisted: Q. Ovidius and Argentaria Polla continued to be counted among his friends and benefactors.' Yet Martial only mentions the Annaei with a sense of nostalgia and with the sense that life for a Spaniard is no longer as good as in times past; cf. *Epigr.* 4.40.2: *docti Senecae ter numeranda domus* ('the trebly notched up house of learned Seneca'); 12.36.8–9: *Pisones Senecasque Memmiosque/et Crispos mihi redde, seu priores* ('Give me back the Pisos, the Senecas, the Memmiuses and the Crispuses, or their predecessors.'). *Epigrams* 10 illustrates that Martial's attachment in 98 CE is to Spain itself, not to Spanish friends in Rome.

⁴¹ *O quam formosus, dum peregrinus eris!/. . . sed uia quem dederit rapiet cito Roma colorem, /Niliaco redeas tu licet ore niger* ('Oh how beautiful you will be, as long as you stay abroad. . . . But Rome will quickly rob you of the colour that the road has given you, though you may return a black man from the Nile', *Epigr.* 10.12.8, 11–12).

⁴² *Dicere te lassum quotiens ego credo Quirino:/quae tua sunt, tibi habe: quae mea, redde mihi* ('How often I believe you to say to Quirinus in your weariness: "Keep what is yours, return what is mine"', *Epigr.* 10.51.15–16).

city tires the weary client. Noticeably, the praise of the happy life in *Epigrams* 10.47 is not located in Rome but in some idyllic landscape. In the final third of the book Martial makes plans to leave Rome and return to Spain: in *Epigrams* 10.78, on Macer's departure to Saloniae, Martial announces his departure for the Celts;⁴³ in *Epigrams* 10.92 Martial is making plans to leave for Spain and entrusts his Nomentum farm to Marrius; in *Epigrams* 10.96 Martial compares Rome and Spain; and the last two epigrams deal with Martial's imminent departure and his Spanish destination.

This desire to leave Rome and detachment from the cityscape coincide with Martial's most introspective definition of himself as man and as epigrammatist. Throughout the tenth book there are several reflective poems about Martial and his life: in *Epigrams* 10.24 Martial announces his fifty-seventh birthday and reflects upon his age; in *Epigrams* 10.65 Martial defines himself as a hairy Spaniard in contrast to a smooth shaven effeminate; in *Epigrams* 10.13 and *Epigrams* 10.104 he focuses on childhood friends. To define his work he now moves from physical monuments to his own literary monument (*solaque non norunt haec monumenta mori* ('These are the only monuments that do not know how to die', 10.2.12)⁴⁴ and casts aside tedious mythological narratives in favour of life's nitty-gritty (*uita, mores, homo*, 10.4).⁴⁵ He inscribes himself as a writer of elegiacs and hendecasyllables and claims worldwide fame for his wit,⁴⁶ cites his readers as his source of income (*lector, opes nostrae*, 10.2.5), and establishes himself in relation to the tradition as second only in renown

⁴³ *Nos Celtas, Macer, et truces Hiberos/cum desiderio tui petemus* ('I will make for the Celts and the fierce Iberians, missing you, Macer', *Epigr.* 10.78.9–10).

⁴⁴ Ovid, dictating his own tombstone inscription to his wife, makes a similar statement that his books are a greater and more enduring memorial than a physical monument. Having dictated the inscription he says: *hoc satis in titulo est. etenim maiora libelli/et diuturna magis sunt monumenta mihi* ('This is enough for an inscription. My *libelli* are a greater and more lasting monument', *Tr.* 3.3.77–8).

⁴⁵ See Boyle (1995a) 256: 'What Martial gives us through the medium of the epigram is a fresh utilisation of the poetic resources of the Latin language to scrutinise Roman behaviour not metaphorically through the medium of myth but paradigmatically, head-on (in so far as language is ever head-on), at the same time expounding and promoting some of the main ideological substructures of Flavian Rome'.

⁴⁶ *Undenis pedibusque syllabisque/et multo sale nec tamen proteruo/notus gentibus ille Martialis/et notus populis—quid inuidetis?*—*/non sum Andraemone notior caballo* ('I, Martial, known to nations for my eleven feet and eleven syllables and for my great wit—though it is not too rash—Why do you envy me? I am no better known than the horse Andraemon', *Epigr.* 10.9).

to Catullus.⁴⁷ Such acute articulation of his personal and poetic identity seems no accident. It is a response to the changed conditions of poetic speech.

Much of *Epigrams* 10 invites comparison with *Epigrams* 1 since this was a book in which Martial was striving to establish himself within the socio-political scene in Rome in 86 CE. In *Epigrams* 1.2 Martial plays with language of freedom and slavery; the books are 'companions' (*comites*, 1.2.2) to those buying them, Martial is the leader (*me duce*, 1.2.6) as he shows the customer where to buy a book, yet, paradoxically, as author of the book, he is for sale.⁴⁸ In terms of physical space, the epigram moves towards a specific locale; the reader is travelling on a 'long road' (*longa uia*, 1.2.2) at the beginning, then is wandering around the city (*urbe uagus tota*, 1.2.6), and finally ends up in Domitian's forum. This epigram contrasts with the last poem in *Epigrams* 10 where the journey is from Rome to Spain:

I nostro comes, i, libelle, Flauo
 longum per mare, sed fauentis undae,
 et cursu facili tuisque uentis
 Hispanae pete Tarraconis arces:
 illinc te rota tollet et citatus
 altam Bilbilin et tuum Salonem
 quinto forsitan essedo uidebis.
 quid mandem tibi quaeris? ut sodales
 paucos, sed ueteres et ante brumas
 triginta mihi quattuorque uisos
 ipsa protinus a uia salutes,
 et nostrum admoneas subinde Flauum
 iucundos mihi nec laboriosos
 secessus pretio paret salubri,
 qui pigrum faciant tuum parentem.
 haec sunt. iam tumidus uocat magister

⁴⁷ *Sic inter ueteres legar poetas, nec multos mihi praeferas priores, uno sed tibi sim minor Catullo* ('So may I be read among the old poets, and may you not prefer many of my predecessors to me, but rank me lower than Catullus', *Epigr.* 10.78.14–16). The epigram ends emphatically on Catullus' name, stressing how important a paradigm Catullus is for Martial. Martial again compares his fame with Catullus' at *Epigrams* 10.103.4–6: *nam decus et nomen famaeque uestra sumus, nec sua plus debet tenui Verona Catullo/meque uelit dici non minus illa suum* ('For I am your glory and name and fame, nor does Verona owe more to her thin Catullus or would want me to be called hers any less.'). Noticeably here the poet's fame gives pride to each poet's home town rather than locating each Roman poet's achievement in Rome.

⁴⁸ This epigram (*Epigr.* 1.2) is discussed in my discussion of 'The Programmatic Unit' (1998) 29–56.

castigatque moras, et aura portum
laxavit melior, uale, libelle:
nauem, scis, puto, non moratur unus.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 10.104)

Go, little book, go, as companion to our Flavius,
over the great sea, but with favourable tide
and easy journey on following winds,
head for the heights of Spanish Tarraco:
from there wheels will lift you swiftly
and you will see perhaps high Bilbilis
and your Salo at the fifth leg.
Do you ask why I send you? So that a few friends,
old friends, not seen for thirty-four winters,
you might greet straight from the road,
so that you may warn our Flavius to find me
a pleasant retreat not requiring much work
and at a reasonable price,
and one that will make your father lazy.
That's it. Now the arrogant skipper
chastises those delaying, and a kinder breeze
has opened the harbour. Farewell, *libellus*:
You know, I think, that no one delays the boat.

Equality in status is apparent between the book and the reader (*comes*, 10.104.1) and the book is to go to greet other 'friends' (*sodales*, 10.104.8). Language of unequal status is avoided, the book is called *libellus* ('little book'), not *liber* ('book'); the world of Spain is free from slavery. The relationship between Martial and his book has changed; he has now become the father (*parentem*, 10.104.15) of his text, recalling the separation of the exiled Ovid from his books in Rome.⁴⁹ The separation of father and son provokes the same lament in the poets' readers.⁵⁰ This relationship is maintained at the beginning of

⁴⁹ *Orba parente suo quicumque uolumina tangis, / his saltem uestra detur in urbe locus* ('All who touch these books bereft of a parent, let, at least, a place be given to them in the city', *Tr.* 1.7.35–6); *saepe per externas profugus pater exulat oras, / urbe tamen natis exulis esse licet. Palladis exemplo de me sine matre creata / carmina sunt; stirps haec progeniesque mea est* ('Often a father is exiled to the furthestmost shores and his children are permitted to live in the city. These verses were born from me in Pallas-fashion without a mother; they are my offspring and my children', *Tr.* 3.14.11–14). One book, a brother of the *Tristia*, regrets the birth of the books for which their father was exiled: *quaerebam fratres, exceptis scilicet illis, / quos suus optaret non genuisse pater* ('I looked for my brothers, except, of course, those which my father wished he'd never begot', *Tr.* 3.1.65–6).

⁵⁰ Stella will weep on reading Martial's poetry (*nec nimium siccis perleget ipse genis, Epigr.* 12.2.16), as will Ovid's reader (*carmina nec siccis perlegat ista genis, Tr.* 1.1.28).

Epigrams 12 where Martial addresses the book's fellow books as brothers (*fratres*, 12.2.6), though the different circumstances of Ovid and Martial are reflected; Ovid, through the analogy with Oedipus, portrays himself as a father who has been killed by his sons.⁵¹ Martial presents a similar relationship between author and book as Ovid in *Tristia* 1, but Martial has voluntarily chosen an exile that was forced upon Ovid.

The movement to a specific location is the same as in *Epigrams* 1.2, but here the destination is not Caesar's forum but Martial's home town, Bilbilis in Spain.⁵² In *Epigrams* 1 Martial is a newly established Spanish poet in Rome. In *Epigrams* 10 he is a Roman poet trying to re-establish his Spanish roots; in *Epigrams* 10.104, it is not Domitian, Nerva or Trajan who is 'Augustan', but Bilbilis (*Augusta Bilbilis*, *Epigr.* 10.103.1). In terms of physical space, the epigram begins on the big blue (*longum mare*), then moves to the heights of Spanish Tarraco, from there to high Bilbilis, and then to a modest retreat (*secessus*). The urgent desire to leave Rome becomes a standard theme of Juvenal, and is comically expressed in *Satire* 3 when Umbricius decides to go and live with the Sibyl at Cumae in a quiet *secessus*.⁵³ Martial, too, often complains of the tedium of the city and finds his material in the daily grind, but here Martial writes his life experience into his work and reflects upon his thirty years in Rome.⁵⁴ A similar sentiment is expressed in *Silvae* 3.5 where Statius tries to convince his wife to return to his home town of Naples. There, however, the poet defines his home in terms of temples, theatres and

⁵¹ Hinds (1985) 13–32 traces this analogy through *Tristia* 1.

⁵² A similar detachment from Rome's cityscape is reflected in Ovid's *Tristia* where the book, now a 'foreigner' (*peregrinus*, *Tr.* 1.1.59), needs to ask for directions in the city (*dicite, lectores, si non graue, qua sit eundum, / quasque petam sedes hospes in urbe liber*, 'Tell me, readers, if it is not too much trouble, where I ought to go, what place in the city I, a guest-book, should seek', *Tr.* 3.1.19–20).

⁵³ *Quamuis digressu ueteris confusus amici / laudo tamen, uacuis quod sedem figere Cumis / destinet atque unum ciuem donare Sibyllae. / ianua Baiarum est et gratum litus amoeni / secessus*. ('Although I'm upset by the departure of my old friend, I laud him because he has found a home in empty Cumae—that doorway to Baiae and lovely shore at a pleasant retreat—and has chosen to give one citizen to the Sibyl', *Juv. Sat.* 3.1–5).

⁵⁴ Martial reflects on his thirtieth year in Rome in the penultimate epigram of the book: *quattuor accessit tricesima messibus aestas, / ut sine me Cereri rustica liba datis, / moenia dum colimus dominae pulcherrima Romae* ('A thirtieth summer has joined three harvests since you gave rustic cakes to Ceres without me, while I have lived among the beautiful walls of mistress Rome', *Epigr.* 10.103.7–9); here the poet's age acts as a structural device. For an outline of Martial's poetic contribution and view of Roman society, see Dominik (1999) 173–82.

colonnades, whereas, for Martial, home is a *secessus*, a retreat, somewhere to escape the mayhem of Rome.⁵⁵ *Epigrams* 10.104 ends on the image of the boat that will make the journey, reminding us of the transition between Rome and Spain. The prayer for kind winds and calm waters acts as a metaphor for Martial's hope that the transition to Spain will be a smooth one.⁵⁶ Not accidentally, the metaphor was used earlier in the book of the urban storm of Martial's life:

hic mihi quando dies meus est? iactamur in alto
urbis, et in sterili uita labore perit.

(Martial, *Epigrams* 10.58.7–8)

When do I have a day to myself here? We are tossed on
the deep of the city, and life wastes away in sterile labour.

Epigrams 10 is a book of transition. The boat's journey at the end of the book symbolises Martial's spiritual return to his homeland. The silence about Trajan, the topographical dislocation and Martial's estrangement from political discourse contrast and coincide with Martial's poetic security. The price of that security as of the imperial revolution is the removal of Flavian Rome's most incisive commentator and its greatest wit.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *Quid nunc magnificas species cultusque locorum/templaque et innumeris spatia interstincta columnis,/et geminam molem nudi tectique theatri/et Capitolinis quinquennia proxima lustris* ('Why should I now praise the magnificent scenes and the adornments of the place, the temples and halls separated by countless colonnades, the two massive theatres, one open-air and one covered, and the quinquennial contests that rival the Capitoline festivals?', *Silv.* 3.5.89–92). Statius, too, expresses a desire to escape the mayhem of Rome: *nulla foro rabies aut strictae in iurgia leges:/morum iura uiris solum et sine fascibus aequum* ('No madness of the forum, no laws drawn in quarrels. Custom alone is law for our citizens and justice is done without the *fasces*.', *Silv.* 3.5.87–8).

⁵⁶ Statius also uses the calmness of the sea as metaphor for the peaceful life that Naples provides: *Has ego te sedes—nam nec mihi barbara Thrace/nec Libye natale solum—transfere laboro,/quas et mollis hiems et frigida temperat aestas,/quas imbelle fretum torpentibus adluit undis./pax secuta locis et desidis otia uitae/et numquam turbata quies somnique peracti* ('I struggle to bring you to this spot—for neither barbarous Thrace or Libya are my native lands—where mild winter and cool summer tempers the land, where the land is washed by the calm waters of a peaceful sea. There is sure peace in that place and a leisurely life, never is the quiet disturbed or the sleep broken.', *Silv.* 3.5.81–6).

⁵⁷ An early draft of this chapter was presented on 21st June 1997 at the Eleventh Pacific Rim Literature Seminar directed by William J. Dominik at the University of Natal, Durban, South Africa. I owe most thanks to Anthony J. Boyle, without whose encouragement this chapter would not have been written. His passion for literature, art, culture and life is a constant inspiration to me.

24. THE FLAVIAN AMPHITHEATRE: ALL THE WORLD AS STAGE

Erik Gunderson

1

Most would agree that the arena was one of the most significant cultural institutions of Rome. But what did it signify? Moralists of all ages have been revolted; elitists cringe at the vulgarity; partisans of the glory that is/was Rome find it hard to believe that the sands could offer anything but power become parody. That is, observers of Rome have frequently decided that the arena was telling, but its message was one we did not wish to hear unless we found in the arena the perverse gratification of *ira et studium*.

Modern scholarship is little disposed to confess itself possessed of the causes of any such partisanship. Frequently its reaction to the arena has instead been to treat the shows as peripheral institutions, to dispassionately catalogue their features, or, when need for comment arises, to repeat a hostile ancient *sententia* of the bread and circuses stamp and be done with it. Yet the increasing interest of classical scholarship in sociological issues has allowed a fruitful return to the significance of the arena.¹ From this perspective the arena is a central and not a peripheral part of the Roman experience, and the ancient critique of the institution subsists in a broader cultural space that encompasses both the Roman who refuses to watch and the one who does so eagerly.

The seeming scandal of the arena has not only invited a more 'cultural' reading of the institution but has also prompted some of the more radical readings of Roman culture in general. The most recent appraisals of the arena have embraced a set of theoretical tools that themselves arose from a period of radical cultural reappraisal.² Carlin Barton's work on the arena has stressed passion,

¹ See also the survey of 'the state of the question' in Fitzgerald (forthcoming) and in Kyle (1998) 7–10.

² Other good but less methodologically radical studies can be found in Kyle

despair, and the irrational.³ Though she does not necessarily foreground him in her notes and discussion, her work owes much to Georges Bataille.⁴ William Fitzgerald is soon to publish an astute and penetrating rereading of Martial that is influenced both directly and indirectly by the theories of Guy Debord and Jean Baudrillard.⁵ My own previous article on the arena foregrounded the thought of Louis Althusser.⁶

The arena does more than provoke contemporary efforts at offering a reading, though. Instead the arena itself is surrounded by a cultural apparatus that everywhere highlights the arena as a site of keen investment in issues of hermeneutics. It is not just the moderns then who find in it an occasion for offering lessons on the proper reading of Roman culture. The Romans themselves were the first to emphasise that the rules of legibility for their own society were profoundly imbricated with the question of the arena.

In making my own return to the arena I would like to examine the ways in which the shows were used to offer a lesson in reading at Rome itself. I wish specifically to focus upon the arena within Flavian culture. Here we will find not just a negotiation of Roman culture by way of the arena, but so too a specific investment in the rereading of that culture in the aftermath of its generation of 68 CE where Nero's death sparked a confused process that would raise and murder three more emperors in short order until Vespasian emerged as *princeps* and survived his own ascent.

The so-called post-modern condition is supposedly characterised by an incredulity towards meta-narratives.⁷ Excessive cynicism and a taste for hollow irony are cause for complaint in many quarters. But one notes similar difficulties in the Flavian era. Nero dies, a struggle ensues, the new imperial line is filled with courtiers from the prior regime. When an emperor who was an actor and sometime gladiator has been slain and replaced by some of his own stage-

(1998); Futrell (1997); Coleman (1990) 44–73; Ville (1981); Veyne (1976); and Auguet (1972). Clavel-Lévêque (1986) is of a much more adventurous stamp but I will not have the opportunity to engage her here.

³ See Barton (1989) 1–36; Barton (1993).

⁴ See especially Bataille (1985); Bataille (1988).

⁵ Fitzgerald (forthcoming). His chief points of orientation are Debord (1995) and Baudrillard (1994).

⁶ Gunderson (1996) 113–51.

⁷ See Lyotard (1984) xxiv.

hands, how does the new order take seriously the spectacle of its own propriety and legitimacy? The question is one that participates in the idiom of the shows because the shows had been a part of the problem. Fortunately they also offer potential answers as well: repairing and restaging the relationships between emperor and arena provides a political as well as a dramaturgical solution. Thus I will argue that both within the institution of and the commentary on the arena we are repeatedly invited to accept the proposition that the Flavian emperors are a stable locus of political and cultural meaning.⁸

Below we will make a brief and targeted survey of representations of the arena within the Flavian era. First we will find the arena being used to provide the historian who looks in upon the age with a diagnostic tool whereby he can compass in brief and telling fashion the soundness of those reigns. We are asked to watch the Romans watching, and to behold in the spectacle of their spectacles a true show of the nature of a reign. The doubling of the perspective and of the optical apparatus will not allow for simple, singular answers. But when we move back into the literature of the age itself we find that this fundamental ambiguity and duplicity of the arena is a feature of the institution in which an author may revel. Pliny yokes power, nature and truth. And Martial does the same while playing with the spectacular and ironic paradoxes that arise from such a set of associations. The arena offers a fertile moment where the world is literally staged for the eyes of the Romans even as the Roman author plays with a notion more familiar to us from Shakespeare: all of the world was already a stage.⁹ Thus there is an inescapable irony. The show may be decried as mere spectacle, but the logic of its stage is no different from the rules structuring the far more serious drama of everyday life. Even as this second version of double vision provoked by the arena unfolds we will find that a key figure emerges to put a check on any endless spiralling glissade of meaning. In reading those readings of the arena we will keep on finding that the *princeps* emerges as a locus of relative surety. Or, rather,

⁸ I will only discuss Vespasian and Titus. I justify my partiality as follows: Vespasian started the line and built the amphitheatre. Titus got it up and running. Thus I am interested in seeing the arena at a moment of its political and institutional rebirth.

⁹ The dramaturgical metaphor has become an increasingly popular aspect of the analysis of Roman culture. See, e.g., Bartsch (1994) and Dupont (1985).

even though ambiguities remain as to who or what an emperor might be, we have it established for us that he is the appropriate and the legitimate object of speculation and inquiry. The *princeps* is a key player; his role is the central one; and, in another moment of doubling, his is the eye to which the spectacle is presented. Thus he is both the protagonist and the ideal spectator.

2

The emperor can be understood as both the concrete and the abstract focal point of the arena. The shows allow for the visual manifestation both of power in general and of the power of an individual emperor. Vespasian took what the arena offered and made it 'his'. Suetonius begins his discussion of Vespasian with a mild apology: the family of the Flavians was obscure and undistinguished, but they brought a much-needed stability to Roman affairs; despite the cruelty of Domitian, the state never had cause to regret the ascendancy of the Flavians (*Vesp.* 1). Vespasian's elevation is attributed to an election of sorts: some semi-rebellious troops left without a fixed allegiance after Otho's death consider which governor would make for the best emperor, and Vespasian is the unanimous choice (*Vesp.* 6). Ultimately more legions go his way. Vitellius is left with Rome but little else. Vitellius is shortly killed. Vespasian has become emperor. But the process was one in which chance played a leading role. Vespasian may be good, but Suetonius presents a world that wanted and found a new emperor; he does not portray an emperor who had decided to make the world his own.

The Flavian dynasty has a beginning that in no way augurs well for a long rule and the successful transmission of authority. Perhaps the power that found its way to Vespasian will desert him as suddenly as it arrived. Suetonius' first remarks about the reign of Vespasian do not point to his military success, but rather to a certain lack or failing in the new leader: *Auctoritas et quasi maiestas quaedam ut scilicet inopinato et adhuc nouo principi deerat* ('Not surprisingly the unexpected and still quite new emperor was lacking *auctoritas* and a certain *maiestas*', *Vesp.* 7.2). Vespasian has the title, but he lacks the *je ne sais quoi* of power, the compelling illusion that argues that greater power has gone to he of the greater desserts. This aura of power acts, then, as a surface effect alluding to an inner substance. It is a

signifier pointing to a hidden signified. Even if Vespasian actually does, for the moment, have the allegiance of the troops, something vital is still missing.

Suetonius goes on to say that this defect is remedied when Vespasian miraculously heals two members of the *plebs* as he sits in state (cf. Tac. *Hist.* 4.81).¹⁰ This is itself a moment of spectacle, a staging of an allegory for his relationship to the state in general. And, in keeping with the somewhat accidental and unexpected nature of his reign, here too Vespasian has to be compelled to heal them, for he does not believe that he has such power even though, in the end, both he and the world learn that he does. It is a performance that takes him and his audience by surprise. Even as the spectacle favours him and even as it is read through him, the emperor is not necessarily the one who controls the show.

The healing is an odd bit of theatre. One wonders if it was not cynically staged. Certainly modern rationalism cannot help but suspect strongly that the blind and lame man were never afflicted and hence never restored. The question then devolves into one of who else knew this to be the case and if Vespasian himself was in on the scam. But whatever the truth might have been, this moment opens up the path to a broader theme: authority and majesty, the two things Vespasian had been wanting, come by way of the theatre of power. Spectacle, display, and the surface of the world are the points at which one begins to establish the grandeur of an emperor's station as actual *contents* and not just as surface illusions. Thus the question of being powerful cannot at all dispense with the project of seeming powerful. The categories of substance and appearance are by no means in opposition. Indeed they often seem to be indistinct.

Vespasian's Rome is a 'society of the spectacle' of a special stamp. What he most needs are appearances. He needs a special variety of appearances, though: he needs *auctoritas* and *maiestas*, appearances that are not mere appearances. Instead they are efficacious appearances, semblances that have the power to produce, maintain, and alter the shape of lived reality.¹¹ The broader point towards which I will be arguing is that the Flavian Amphitheatre is the site at which

¹⁰ Tacitus reports that the 'miracles' happened in Alexandria, not Rome as one might guess from Suetonius' account.

¹¹ Perhaps one should compare such appearances to the 'performative utterances' made famous in Austin (1962).

the play between image and reality is most profoundly negotiated without ever being decided in favour of the truth of the thing as against the speciousness of the image. For the question of being an emperor is already one of what it is to seem an emperor.

Suetonius' portrait of Vespasian's reign in the next sections reveals a man concerned with the restoration of Rome. Debauched soldiers are ostentatiously snubbed. Provincial arrangements are reformed. Buildings at Rome are repaired. Damaged records are reconstituted (similarly, see Tac. *Hist.* 4.40). But where Augustus' motto may have been 'The Republic Restored' in large measure we see in Vespasian a project whose slogan could readily be 'The Principate Restored'.

In addition to all of these efforts directed at re-establishing a proper relationship between *princeps* and his state, Vespasian embarks on three projects whose thrust is more creative than recuperative. Vespasian begins three 'new works': a temple of Peace near the Forum, a temple for the Divine Claudius, and the building that would become the Flavian Amphitheatre. A temple of Peace sends an obvious message: with Vespasian peace has returned to the state. The temple for Claudius, though described under the rubric of *noua opera*, is a new version of an old project: Nero had destroyed almost as much of it as Agrippina had been able to build. In this case we find that going forward again means looking back as well. Vespasian indicates, effectively, that Nero was the interruption, while legitimacy resides in the remaining sequence of *principes*. And the amphitheatre reads similarly. This is an 'Augustan' project on Vespasian's part: he had learned that that emperor had wished to erect such a building in the centre of the city (Suet. *Vesp.* 9.1).¹² Looking the part of the emperor thus involves performances of authority and majesty on the part of the sovereign, but to these Vespasian adds a transformation of the material substance of Rome.¹³ In addition to the spectacle of the emperor himself, the city likewise bears witness to the nature of its ruler. It too will be restored to itself, and this restoration will increase Rome's authority and majesty. As these qualities return to the city, they are also consolidated in the person of the

¹² Futrell (1997) 211–13 emphasises the importance in a variety of dimensions of the arena to Augustus and his reign.

¹³ Futrell (1997) 74 notes as well an increase in the building of amphitheatres in the troubled region of Gaul during the Flavian period. She sees in these eleven structures a 'harbinger of enforced peace and prosperity [and] entertainment courtesy of the Imperial dynasty'.

emperor. Thus city and emperor each allude to the other, and the established authority of city and principate offer their symbolic capital to underwrite Vespasian's majesty in exchange for the emperor's expenditure of real capital in the name of restoring the appearance of Roman authority to Rome itself.

There is little reason to believe that Vespasian was the first to recognise and manipulate the social logic of Roman appearances in this manner. Buildings, shows, and pomp were long a part of Roman public life. But Vespasian does deserve our attention for being determined to insert a massive amphitheatre into this mixture even as such a gesture is itself presented as a traditional, conservative move, a fulfilling of the dream of Augustus. Moreover, much as with Augustus, so too with Vespasian: after a period of revolution, bloodshed, and confusion, many different versions of Rome were possible. Vespasian's conservative revolution restoring the principate sets him in an explicit parallel with the first *princeps*. But if the ultimate message is indeed one of a principate restored and not a republic restored, then what we find in Vespasian are further refinements in the techniques of sovereignty. And here too a renegotiation of the power of spectacle allows for the selective refinement of the technology of spectacle as an element of imperial hegemony. The amphitheatre is both the product and producer of a fantasy of imperial power attributed to Augustus and made actual by Vespasian.

It will be useful to pause for a moment in order to appreciate more fully what is implied by the giving of games in Rome. Gladiators and beast shows had been offered at Rome for centuries. The elites had long fought for the privilege of putting them on, and with the rise of the emperors access to the privilege was tightly controlled. But we must not dismiss this as a squabble over the power to pander. Instead let us imagine for the moment the arena as more a form than a content or as an apparatus and not an *opus operatum*. And even if what one fabricates there *can* be cynical propaganda or fodder for a horde that some aristocrats might think vulgar, this is neither the necessary nor the inevitable product of a show. Moreover, even in those cases where such would be desired, the narrow propagandistic version of the word ideology still does not exhaust the broader ideological significance of the institution.¹⁴ The arena makes

¹⁴ All of this is discussed more fully in Gunderson (1996).

manifest the Romans to themselves. It stages as well the mutual relations between various elements of Rome. And so also does it offer this multifarious Rome dramas on the sand with a variety of allegorical and metaphorical possibilities: we find in the arena fictions of empire, of mastery, of virtue, and of virility. The arena thus serves as an optical apparatus that both reveals and makes present visual truths about Rome. It is an eye and a projector at one and the same time.¹⁵

We will have a difficult time evaluating the 'truth value' of the spectacular propositions offered in the arena. The shows of course happen, but what they say is neither true nor false. Everyone knows that this is mere theatre, yet frequently one hears about how this spectacle offers a truer truth than one could find elsewhere. Conversely, even where one knows that those really are men and beasts down there fighting and dying, the reality of their travails is always subsumed within the apparatus of the arena itself. Real deaths thereby become fictive ones, and real blood is always also stage blood.

This slip between the fiction and the real replays itself at the level of the commentary on the arena. Thus Suetonius' portraits of the emperors at the shows are themselves restagings of a theatrical moment: the emperor displayed himself to 'Rome', and the author shows us an emperor offering himself to be seen. Thus the arena's propensity for making truth visible is only further fulfilled by the critical gaze directed at it. For example, if Titus made a display, that display took place in the arena both as a place and as a logical construct. The meaning of that sign may be seemingly read against the emperor or in a manner critical of the amphitheatre, but the broader move only recapitulates the very logic within which Titus plays: 'The arena makes meaning, if only I can be the master of that meaning'.

Indeed Titus uses the amphitheatre not just to put on games but also to make explicitly political displays. Other than the lavish opening festivities, Suetonius argues for Titus' *comitas* ('kindness') by noting that once the emperor promised that he was going to produce the *munus* ('gift') after the people's wishes and not his own (*Tit.* 8.2). Thus the people are the *editores*, not the emperor. Their will counts,

¹⁵ See Silverman (1982) for an exegesis of the connection between film theory and psychoanalysis, and, specifically, for commentary on the relationship between the eye and the projector.

not his. The show shows the healthy relationship between the *princeps* and his subjects. This passage closes with an interesting verbal echo: after describing the promised show, Suetonius remarks, ‘and that’s clearly what he did’ (*et plane ita fecit*). If we foreground the visual aspect of *plane* (‘clearly’) more strongly, we can say that Titus ratified his sentiment by making it visibly manifest. This seemingly casual phrase is worth noting, though, for Suetonius uses it only one other time in the biographies of the Caesars. When speaking of Nero’s savage reign Suetonius says: *sed nec populo aut moenibus patriae pepercit. dicente quodam in sermone communi: ‘ἐμοῦ θανόντος γαῖα μειχθήτω πυρί.’ immo’, inquit, ‘ἐμοῦ ζῶντος’, planeque ita fecit.* (‘But he spared neither the people nor the walls of the city. In conversation someone once said, “When I am dead, may the earth be consumed by fire”. Nero said, “No, while I live”. And that’s clearly what he did [*planeque ita fecit*]’, Nero 38.1). The Flavians build, Nero destroys.¹⁶ Nero punishes the people to prove his power, Titus lets them dictate his shows. Indeed Nero’s shows were frequently displays of his ruthless determination to make others submit to his authority: he once forced hundreds of *nobiles* to fight. Each emperor makes plain, clear, and manifest the quality of his reign by producing displays of his power that ratify ‘truths’ of character.

Truth, then, has as one of its special forms the spectacular. This may seem an over-statement or an over-reading of a reified and abstracted vision of the arena on *my* part that is then argued to be an indigenous Roman category. Yet I wish to offer two case studies that will explore the manner in which Roman authors play with the spectacle of truth as mediated by the eye of the emperor. Pliny’s *Naturalis Historia* is itself something of a grand *munus*, and Martial’s *Liber de Spectaculis* likewise participates in the logic of a gift that is also a show. For both authors, truths of the world are closely imbricated with questions of imperial authority.

3

Pliny’s *Naturalis Historia* uses the imagery of the arena in a two-fold manner. First the arena is a place where the facts of nature are made

¹⁶ Tac. *Hist.* 4.41–44 reveals how the question of who did what under Nero’s rule deeply informs political considerations of the new regime.

manifest. Next, nature itself is spectacular. Thus the staging of nature in the arena by Romans is less an art of fiction than a restaging of a showy quality already latent in nature itself. But, in both instances, the eye of the emperor is readily assimilated to the gaze of the ideal spectator.¹⁷ Thus the truth of the spectacle of nature becomes a truth bound up with the social and political structure of Rome.

The natural history of a beast includes its Roman history. When an animal was first seen at Rome is a regular feature of its description, and a likely place for it to be seen is in a show.¹⁸ The accretion of stories about an object serves as a fundamental part of its natural history. That is, despite contemporary scientism's disapproval of the incidental and accidental quality of such anecdotes, the nature of a thing and its history were once not separate categories.¹⁹ Moreover, this history tends to be a history as staged and presented by and for Roman *nobiles*. Natural history frequently becomes also a sort of theatrical history. The rise of the emperors tends only to contract the circle of 'history' as it relates to objects into a specifically 'imperial history' of nature. We find, then, a specific connection between the arena and natural history: the right to be an *editor* strictly circumscribes the possibilities of presenting nature to the people. This trend precisely parallels the right to triumph since in both cases the staging for the people of 'the world' as subjected to and the subject of Roman representation was seen as a highly political affair.²⁰

If, as I have argued, the arena acts as the social organ of sight,²¹ and if the emperor is himself both the one who organises the field of vision and one of its chief spectacles, then the spectacle of nature is a textual enterprise with a variety of social valences. Rather than seeing in Pliny neutral science we instead find engaged commentary. But this commentary is of course engaged: the nature that is revealed to Caesar is Caesar's nature in a manifold sense. This is the nature conquered by Rome in the name of this and other Caesars. This is the world controlled by Caesar. The world that Pliny offers up for

¹⁷ Cf. Murphy (1997) 96–134.

¹⁸ See Murphy (1997) 131, who follows French (1994) 216. Murphy's discussion is rich in examples. Cf. Gunderson (1996) 133. Pliny repeatedly mentions Caesar and Pompey as offering novel spectacles of this stamp. This is in keeping with their mutual competition and grand designs. On the last, cf. Whittaker (1994) 32.

¹⁹ Cf. Foucault (1973) 219.

²⁰ Cf. Greenblatt (1991) 12–13.

²¹ Gunderson (1996) 123–6.

any reader's contemplation is specifically offered to Titus as its chief viewer.²² Pliny's Preface to the *Naturalis Historia* is itself spectacular and florid in its praise of and address to Titus. As is the case with Martial below, the show is the emperor's in a two-fold sense: he offers it, and he consumes it. The other viewers are there in a sense to watch him watching and to see him giving. Though this is but one possible valence or inflection of the arena as a social apparatus, it is an important one and so too is it a prominent one in our Flavian sources.

And as Caesar makes a spectacle in order to reveal nature, so too is Nature one to put on shows. Nature herself plays the role of an *editor* in Pliny's description of the fight between snakes and elephants (*HN* 8.34). Perhaps it is but a passing image amidst a vast text, but it remains nevertheless an arresting one: 'Nature making a spectacle for herself'. As *retiarius* is to *secutor*, so is *draco* to *elephas*. Nature is the producer and author of a world become an arena. And as the Colosseum puts the world on display, so too is the world already a thing made for spectacular consumption. Nature offers and consumes these spectacles of herself and for herself. And if the world is Caesar's, then Nature's shows are his by extension. The actual shows one sees in the arena are not simple displays in any sense. Is it unnatural for an elephant to be brought to Rome to fight in the arena when it is already out fighting in the sands of the world? Even as a *uenatio* is recognised to be a thing staged and to be in a sense 'rhetorical' (more on this below), these theatrical propositions nevertheless have a truth value even where their rhetoricity would seem to us most contrived. That is, the fabricated is not necessarily fictive. The Romans are staging true nature, the truth of nature, and nature as truth in the arena.²³ Once again the significance of this set of associations itself shifts when we recognise the strong set of structural parallels that subsist between the *princeps* and *natura*. The spectacular rhetoric of the arena as institution invites one to see each party as metonymous for the other. Accepting this spectacular trope of social logic implies an affirmation of a truth of the world, of the

²² Conte (1994a) 74–5 comments in a more general sense on the connection between science and power in Pliny.

²³ Cf. Debord (1995) 14: 'Thus the spectacle, though it turns reality on its head, is itself a product of real activity. . . . [R]eality erupts within the spectacle, and the spectacle is real.'

emperor as a font of truth, and of the lived reality of one's relationship to the emperor.²⁴

We have long since learned to suspect in all uses of the word 'nature' culture wearing a disingenuous mask. Pliny's nature always already contains the cultural, but our job is not to 'unmask' his nature as cultural since Pliny himself already sees the two as fundamentally linked. First, nature has a history, and it is a history of specific interest not just to man in general but to the Roman in particular. And this history includes a history of displays of nature and the 'truth' of that nature in the arena. Next, not only is nature herself an *editor*, but so too is she a show offered to Titus.²⁵ Specifically Pliny the author offers the spectacle of nature comprehended, compiled, and annotated as a *munus* to the emperor. Moreover, the emperor resides at every point in this circle. Not only does he receive the gift/show, but he also acts in advance as the guarantor of its contents. Deprecating his own powers of representation, Pliny says in his introduction: *quibus de causis atque difficultatibus nihil auso promittere, hoc ipsum tu praestas, quod ad te scribimus. haec fiducia operis, haec est indicatura* ('Because of these considerations and difficulties I cannot promise anything. You are why I write. This is its guarantee; this is what will fix its worth.', *HN praef.* 19). Or, more literally, Pliny says 'that I write to you is something that you yourself stand surety for': Titus is the gold standard of the text. It is by him, for him, and through him that the economy of Pliny's discourse circulates. The text of the *Naturalis Historia* is the discharging of an office, the offering of a gift, and the presentation of a show, or, to put this in Latin, a *munus*, a *munus*, and a *munus*.²⁶ We can say of this and any other *munus* that as a spectacle it is 'not a collection of images;

²⁴ See Althusser (1971) 127–86 on interpellation and naming. Likewise, as Debord might put it, the arena would like to be mistaken for 'an uninterrupted monologue of self-praise' by a for the ruling order. See Debord (1995) 19. See also Fitzgerald (forthcoming): 'Submission to the emperor is submission to the spectacle and vice versa'. And Futrell (1997) 212 claims that the *munera* represented 'the rhetoric of Roman authority enacted'.

²⁵ Compare the superimposition of the diagrams of the look and the gaze in Lacanian optics: the site of mere spectatorship and looking, that is, the emperor's seat, is both the object of and a metaphor for the constative force of the filed of vision in general. See Lacan (1981) 105–119 and also the commentary of Silverman (1992) 125–56. On seating, see Futrell (1997) 161–7; Rawson (1987) 83–114; Kolendo (1981) 301–15.

²⁶ Actually Pliny's preface focuses on the image of the votive offering made by

rather it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images'.²⁷

Nature as *editor* stands in as a metaphor for the emperor himself. One is invited to see the whole signifying chain that binds together the universe as natural/imperial. More specifically, one is asked to make the Lacanian equation 'emperor = phallus' where the phallus is the guarantor of the validity of the whole universe of signs.²⁸ Given that the world necessarily contains objects that one has to take and mistake for the phallus in order for the subject to maintain psychic coherence we ought not dismiss this equation as a specious bit of flattering rhetoric. That is, if we must believe in something, why should one doubt that the emperor could be a locus of belief? The ideology of the arena functions such as to promote consistently the psychic affirmation of an order of power that necessarily favours the emperor.

The preceding reading of Pliny has picked out some strands from an impossibly vast and complex cloth. The important point here is less a revision in the way one reads Pliny but instead a recognition of the pervasiveness of the arena as a metaphor. And it is not 'merely' a metaphor. The world as spectacle is a notion that is not just a figure of speech. In fact, one might well argue that it is a vital component of the rhetoric of psychic life at Rome.²⁹ Thus the arena is

Pliny to the god Titus (Plin. *HN praef.* 19). Recall as well that the younger Pliny mentions that the elder Pliny's own notebooks were once themselves sought after as a sort of trophy (*Ep.* 3.5.17).

²⁷ I am detourning a maxim of Debord where he defines 'the spectacle'. See Debord (1995) 12. Debord's text is designed as a supplement to Marx's theories of ideology and fetishism where 'the spectacle' acts as a point of evolution within 'late' capitalism. To my eye the spectacle serves best as an extended development of ideas already latent in the idea of commodity fetishism *qua* idea as per Marx (1906) and it should not be tightly yoked to moments within the specific history of the evolution of the commodity form. Debord would doubtless disagree with this stance. Moreover, I prefer to find 'fetishism' or, rather, the mystified relationship between persons as mediated by things, as itself an active principle in periods where a strict reading of Marx (e.g., Marx [1906] 69) would hesitate to see it. My reasons for these distinctions cannot be spelled out here. I would instead prefer to align myself with a project like Bourdieu's 'generalized materialism'. See Bourdieu (1990) *passim*, esp. 17 for the phrase 'generalized materialism' even if that passage does not even begin to spell out the details of Bourdieu's thinking.

²⁸ See Lacan (1983) 80 on the phallus' role: 'For it is to this signified that it is given to designate as a whole the effect of there being a signified, inasmuch as it conditions any such effect by its presence as signifier'.

²⁹ Butler (1997) articulates how such a rhetoric might be described in a post-Althusserian reading of the subject.

not simply another available metaphor but instead a master-metaphor, an image that allows for the production and propagation of other truths. Its transferences and its substitutions model the concatenation of the chain of signifiers in general. But the arena's model of substitution is as much articulated by the specific power structure of Rome as are the very seats of the arena: hierarchy, stratification, and privilege are assumed and indeed required. As a place where truth is produced, exchanged, and reproduced as a specific and specifically differentiated and articulated Roman truth, there is no clear point outside of the arena's discursive logic from which one merely looks in upon it, grabs it as an image and redeploys it.³⁰ For the very scenography of this cognitive action is itself 'spectacular'.

A more detailed and indeed a more complex portrait of the same ambiguous play with the rhetoric of the arena as it relates to Flavian society can be found in Martial's epigrams written to offer a textual 're-edition' of the games held by Titus at the opening of the Flavian Amphitheatre.³¹ Titus gave the games, and Martial gives them back to him in versified form. Once again we see a closed circuit where the emperor is both the origin and the destination of the meaning and message of the spectacular. Martial emphasises that the shows are for Titus (*tibi*), and he himself plays in and with the position of *editor* long enough to offer back to return the gift of the show to its rightful owner.³²

Martial employs verbal rhetoric to offer a textual display that rearticulates the visual rhetoric of the original. In so doing he exposes

³⁰ See Gunderson (1996) 149.

³¹ The whole of my account should be compared to the provocative essay of Fitzgerald (forthcoming). The chief point of distinction between our positions I take to be the following: while Fitzgerald tends to see nostalgia, loss, and disenchanting substitutions, I see instead an example of power's fertility and a play within those structures of power that is consonant with Rome's past and with contemporary belief in the validity of its present. While I acknowledge the deconstructive force of supplementarity in the arena—or in Fitzgerald's terms, the tendency of the spectacles to become mere spectacle—I see also 'ideological' solicitations of belief and affirmation. That is, I am interested in what is left over after one laughs at the fake Prometheus and in the forces that produce the coherence of this position.

³² The whole thus is reminiscent of the psychic circuit of the message as establishing truth for the subject. See Lacan (1972) 39–72 and Lacan (1988) 191–206. Derrida (1987) offers a critique of the neatness of the scheme without subverting the idea that meaning is something that travels or would travel as a gift. For more extended commentary on such circuits and their relationship to classical literature, see Gunderson (1997) and Wohl (1998).

at both the visual and the discursive levels the tropes of the arena in Flavian Rome. Martial is particularly interested, though, in the figure of metonymy, and the notion of substitution persists throughout the poems. This substitutive logic is one that informs the contents of the spectacle, the commentary on this spectacle, and so too the substitution of Martial for Titus in his own re-presentation of the show. Substitution thus acts as something of a master-metaphor for the book even as the very notion of metaphor is itself a reference to the theme of substitution. And while there is a good deal of play and the signifier proves most slippery in Martial, nevertheless the whole text cycles around the figure of the emperor as addressee, as author, and as guarantor of meaning. Thus Martial finds in the shows an opportunity to ask what it means to be an emperor, to see an emperor, to speak to an emperor, and even to hold a mirror up to the emperor in order to offer him himself as a spectacle. If in the arena all the world does not become a play and nothing more, it is because the emperor is the spectacle of truth that makes all the other spectacles 'true'. As with Pliny, the metaphor of the emperor as truth guarantees the meaning of other truths even as they all become oriented towards and legible through him. The central propositions are in every case both that the world is always already 'showy'—both on display and meant for display—and that the ideal spectator sits in the place of the emperor. Thus one could wish for a better *uenatio* and a better *princeps*, but the idea that there should be a *uenatio* and that it would be given for a spectator who identifies with the eye of *princeps* is not questioned.

The theme of substitution acts as the punch-line to the first of Martial's epigrams. The Egyptian pyramids, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, and other wonders of the world have been added to and replaced by the Flavian Amphitheatre: *unum pro cunctis fama loquetur opus* ('Fame will tell of one work in the place of/in the name of (*pro*) all the rest', *Spect.* 1.8).³³ But an arena makes for a most unusual addition to the lists of wonders. Not only is it itself a marvel, but so too is it a factory of the marvellous. And much as the pyramids

³³ This line of argument forms a prominent and exciting part of Fitzgerald's reading of the arena. Fitzgerald also emphasises the connection of Debord's thought to the question of substitution. I wish here to allude to the logic of the Derridean 'dangerous supplement' that adds by replacing. See Derrida (1976) 145. Indeed Martial himself is playing with almost every possible meaning of *pro* throughout these passages.

are ultimately deprived of their glory by the shows, so too are many mythical tales replaced and displaced when they are either restaged or outstripped by the shows in the amphitheatre. Martial, *Liber de Spectaculis* 2.4 claims as well that the amphitheatre also substitutes for Nero's Golden House and forms a public monument rather than a private one.³⁴ Against that one house (*una domus*) literally and figuratively dominating the city we now set the *unum opus* of the amphitheatre. Thus not only is this wonder merely wondrous, it is also an apparatus where questions of the wonderful will be variously reworked. And it is specifically a place where the old, bad marvels of Nero's house that all saw and loathed can be transformed into new, public spectacles that are offered to and enjoyed by everyone.

The second poem ends much as the first. We find a second punchline and once again it concerns substitution: *reddita Roma sibi est et sunt te praeside, Caesar, / deliciae populi, quae fuerant domini* ('Rome is returned to herself, and, under your protection, Caesar, now what were once a master's pleasures are a people's', *Spect.* 2.11–12). The set of replacements is a complex one: Rome is given Rome back (*reddita Roma sibi est*). Titus is swapped for Nero. Delights belonging to one party now belong to another. But Titus is not exactly swapped for Nero: *dominus* ('master') is replaced by *praeses* ('protector'). And Titus does not own, he merely watches over and guards. The emphasis is on representing Rome in the foreground while Titus hangs off comfortably in the wings, merely watching, merely in an ablative phrase loosely connected to the main clause. The shows are Rome's, they are Rome's pleasure. They replace Nero's pleasures. Titus is the guarantor of Rome's new and newly restored relationship to itself, but he is not the 'master' of the situation. He is everywhere assumed but he does not directly determine or command the whole.

Even if he is merely a piece of the puzzle, Titus is nevertheless the key piece. Or, in the idiom of optics so favoured by the shows themselves, Titus is the focal point. While the second poem may instead present him as a sort of vanishing point or horizon, the Rome that Rome gets back 'for itself' (*sibi*) and the pleasures that come with this are henceforth in the poems clearly co-ordinated with

³⁴ See also the arguments of Fitzgerald in this regard and throughout this section. There are numerous points of convergence in our accounts, and Fitzgerald's analysis is frequently more detailed than mine and so too does it engage more poems.

the shows being offered to Titus as *tibi* and the sense that the spectacles are addressed 'to him' as a viewer first and foremost. Thus the rest of Rome is given its due precisely as Titus is given his and, indeed, as he gives it both to himself and us as the *editor* of the whole.

This same ambiguity of ownership begins the third poem. As did the whole of the first poem, the first line of the third juxtaposes *barbara* with Caesar. In this case though, we are speaking to Caesar and not of his amphitheatre: *Quae tam seposita est, quae gens tam barbara, Caesar, / ex qua spectator non sit in urbe tua?* ('What race is so remote, so barbarous, Caesar, that from it there is no spectator in your city?', *Spect.* 3.1–2). And though moments ago we heard of a Rome given back to herself and of a master dispossessed of his possession, here the city belongs to Titus (*urbe tua*). In a sense the whole point of this move is to prove the substitution possible and unobjectionable: *suus* or *tuus* does not matter. Changing the name does not change the meaning. Titus comes in the place of (*pro*) Nero, and we are glad of that. Rome is restored to herself, but speaking of Rome doubles for and stands in the place of (*pro*) speaking of Flavian Rome. Supplementing the name of the Flavian *gens* adds to and subtracts from the simple notion of Rome. And the arena is the place where this confusion is compounded: the spectacle is offered to Rome, but it also represents a portrait drawn by and designed for Titus himself. He is the point towards which the whole is addressed, the point from which the scene before the spectators radiates, but also a point nowhere within the picture proper.³⁵ Indeed we are ourselves invited to adopt his position and his perspective as ours. The seeing of what is shown then is easiest and we are afforded the best view. But in adopting this perspective we have also implicitly acceded to the legitimacy of *this* version of the optical apparatus. That is, in sitting in the emperor's seat and seeing with his eyes, we affirm that eyes and seats should be somehow 'imperial', that such notions are proper to Rome. We affirm that the emperor does not merely sit and watch over, *praseses*, but instead that his is the best and most important seat and the one to which all others are related and compared.

Seeing, believing, Caesar and the arena: the four notions all go together in Martial's poems. The arena serves as a factory of truth,

³⁵ Cf. Foucault (1973) 3–16 on the present absence of the king in Velasquez's *Las Meninas*.

and Titus serves as both the inspector and the ideal consumer of the goods therein produced. But Martial is very much aware of the ironies of the situation: 'fabricating a truth' might well seem like the construction of specious wares, mere artifice at the expense of the truly true. Martial embraces the paradox. Not only is the arena displayed as the place where truth is put on display by and for Caesar, but so too is the logic of substitution perfectly acceptable within this context. What the arena manifests can and will be taken 'in the place of' the truth. That is, it becomes effectively true by first being spectacularly true. Moreover, the accumulation of stagey counterfeits for reality does not compromise the arena, rather it shows the malleability of reality itself when confronted with the apparatus of the arena. And, lastly, Martial's verbal substitutes for the truth of the thing themselves try to both reproduce and outstrip the visual rhetoric of the original. Thus the textual show shows how such substitution is a virtuous necessity and an opportunity for virtuosity and mastery on the part of the poet become (re)editor. We are not to imagine a sad parody of the actual and the true, but rather the actual production of the actual and the true. The truth-value of these truths, though, are themselves bound to a chain of associations and substitutions co-ordinated by the ideology of the arena and the privileged position of the emperor within that ideology.

We see what Caesar was offered. We watch him watching. Our own faith in the original comes because we beheld an *imperial* substitute. The restaging is incompletely appreciated if we neglect that it is carefully articulated to allow Caesar's eyes to be the authoritative ones, and they substitute for and guarantee the validity of what 'we' see. And in a further irony within this already ironic representation, the poem itself has substituted for the original experience of watching. It has replaced that moment with its own rereading of that moment by way of Caesar. Thus it performs and manifests the very message towards which it argues. In so doing it reproduces the spectacular logic upon which it makes a commentary.

The truths of the arena are both found and made. For Martial all such truths are specifically Caesarean truths: each message both comes from him and returns to him. Martial offers reading lessons for the arena. As a 'good reader' he keeps on refinding Caesar in the shows. And so too does the good reader of Martial himself learn to do the same. Again the text recapitulates its message within its own internal structure. That such readings by Martial of the shows

or by a reader of Martial could possibly seem tendentious is of no matter. The game here is to find as true a fabricated reality made in and offered by the arena. The shows themselves are fundamentally rhetorical, witty, and ironic: it is only our job to retool these bits of raw rhetoric into polished epigrams. That is, being a good reader is not distinguished from being a good poet, and we are judged by what we have made of what we have seen.

Martial is very fond of the birth of a piglet from a speared sow. He writes three successive epigrams, poems 12 through 14, on the surprising conjunction of death and birth. The third ends with a line well suited to our interests: *o quantum est subitis casibus ingenium!* ('O what wit there is in surprise events!'). Part of the wit is itself enfolded in the maxim: *casus* as 'event' also means 'fall' and therefore plays upon the 'falling mother' (*matre cadente*) whose offspring runs off as she dies. But the broader point is that, yes, the arena is a factory of meaning, that the shows are a collection of clever circumstances, and that the job is to apply our *ingenium* to read and respond to the *ingenium* that is already there.³⁶

If the sow poems argue that the arena's is a spontaneous rhetoric and that Martial is merely re-offering to the emperor the explicit verbal expression of the various metaphors and metonymies of the shows themselves, these same notions form the core of two other poems about nature and the arena that more specifically concern Caesar himself. *Liber de Spectaculis* 20[17] speaks of a 'suppliant' (*supplex*) elephant paying reverence to 'you, Caesar'. The final two verses of this four-line poem are spent arguing that this nature is true nature: *Non facit hoc iussus nulloque docente magistro:/ Crede mihi, nostrum sentit et ille deum* ('He didn't do this because he was commanded. No trainer taught him. Believe me: even that animal perceived our god.', *Spect.* 20.3–4[17]).³⁷ The account is a bit suspect. Still, the point of

³⁶ Moreover, there is always another *ingenium* present as well, that of the *princeps*. See Mart. *Spect.* 23.4[20]: *O dulce inuicti principis ingenium!* ('O delightful wit of a matchless prince!') Here *inuicti* encompasses both 'undefeated' and 'invincible'.

³⁷ I personally find it difficult to believe that the elephant had not in fact been trained since indeed very little of what the beasts actually did in the arena could be expected to have occurred without some sort of orchestration. For example, getting two animals to rush out and fight one another in front of thousands of noisy Romans must have been very difficult. Without starving, goading, and general training—see the several references to *magistri*—it would be all too common to have at least one of the combatants merely cower. That is, all of the nature on display is more or less unnatural: elephants do not fight bulls.

the whole is that the arena produces and reveals truth. 'Believe me' (*Crede mihi*, 17.4), says the poet. The world of nature and the social structure of Rome are not antithetical. As with Pliny, the two are actually complimentary. Indeed the former recognises the latter. And so too do both these poems and the arena itself teach 'us' how to recognise in nature lessons pertinent to our culture. Further, we ought to take our cues from this spectacular version of nature. *Liber de Spectaculis* 30 tells of a suppliant doe bowing to Caesar and hounds refraining from finishing the kill as they await his verdict. Despite the loss of an intervening verse, the preserved line that follows makes clear the shape of the event: *haec intellecto principe dona tulit* ('Having recognised the *princeps*, she got this gift', 33.6[29,30]). Once again Martial turns to the trope of belief and the assertion that the arena's nature comments more truthfully than the deceitful rhetoric of our culture: *Numen habet Caesar, sacra est haec, sacra potestas, / credite: mentiri non didicere ferae* ('Caesar has a divinity to him. This is a sacred power. Believe it: beasts do not know how to lie.', 33.7–8[29,30]). That is, Martial argues that we would do well to recognise in the contents of the shows object lessons for our own lives. Not only do we recognise the hand of Caesar in the arena, but, conversely, the arena itself recognises him. The natural, theatrical, and aleatory world of the shows—never mind that one grows anxious over the relationship between these adjectives—all keep reaching the same conclusion, namely, that Caesar is the one to whom we should bow and from whom we should take our cue.

4

How Flavian is the Flavian arena? It is fantastically and spectacularly Flavian. That is, in the shows of the Flavian era we find a constant reference to the Flavian family. So too are the Flavians themselves apparently well aware of the possibilities of the shows to further promote their interests and to propagate the image of themselves as good and rightful leaders of the state. But, following the inherent logic of the arena itself, one could also *substitute* another emperor and perhaps another poet. That is, I see little real novelty in the Flavian arena. Perhaps one should say instead that we find an intensification and refinement of the function and use of the apparatus. One notes a seemingly concerted effort on the part of both the emperors themselves and the authors of the age to exploit rel-

atively well understood properties of the institution to the fullest. It is easy to imagine similar commentary coming from other authors and about other emperors in other periods. But the massive investment in time and energy on the part of Vespasian in order to construct the amphitheatre when and where he built it should be taken very seriously.

The Flavian version of the arena is very Flavian. The republican shows could be given by different men. The lessons nature taught were not necessarily always and only about a single Roman and the relations of others to him. Nor, for that matter, does the imperial arena necessarily have such a univocal force. Nevertheless, there is an effort on the part of many to give it just such a valence, and that effort is most manifest in the case of the Flavian arena.

The arena is structurally overdetermined. Even as it constantly invites confusions so does it subvert them by adducing as well other possibilities and further readings.³⁸ But in the case of Pliny we do find a recurring exegesis of nature and spectacle as imperial. Thus while the arena only potentially favours a sort of totalitarian image of the emperor, Pliny by no means steers his text away from such a reading. Indeed Pliny's preface addressed to Titus includes the shocking notion that the text as a whole is literally by and for Titus and not merely offered to him (recall Plin. *HN praef.* 19). Martial too offers the same closed circuit where the emperor is everywhere, where the dative *tibi* is always to be parsed as a dative of the possessor, a dative of advantage, and a dative of reference. In both cases as well the reader who is not the emperor is invited to see with the emperor's eyes, to sit in the imperial box, and to behold a spectacle either of beasts in the arena or of the beasts out in nature. The reader adopts the perspective of the eye of power: for him/her the world is on display. But while each author may insist in his own way that 'seeing is believing', the display itself has been choreographed and staged by a specific social structure and institutional mechanisms such that we will behold a display of this sort and no other. The final irony, though, is that both emperor and

³⁸ I wish to invoke the notion of 'possibility' in only a limited sense. For example, it is possible that a major Hollywood movie would present a radical critique of capitalism and a strident call to action against capital. But given the political economy of the movie industry as an industry, it might be a long wait for any such film to appear. Nevertheless, moments that are awkward, ambiguous, doubled or rich in possibility can, do, and will arise within Hollywood films. Indeed some films are aggressively marketed as 'radical' and their gross profits increase accordingly.

ideal reader are themselves product of the apparatus of the arena: the very position of mastery is itself a product, and we are not to imagine autonomous self-willed subjects now think and therefore are. Instead the arena is one of a variety of institutions where the subject—including the emperor himself as ‘ideal subject’—is imagined in a manifold sense, as a psychic, a visual, and a social construct.

The results are perhaps ‘oppressive’ in the sense that one is used to decrying the sovereignty of the emperor at the expense of the (equally oppressive) *nobiles* in the manner of Tacitus. But so too is the case never closed. These displays made for the emperor are always also rhetorical displays. The arena’s fabricated truths are ostentatiously rhetorical productions postulating truths of nature. This rhetoricity is never disavowed, though. In fact, the showy possibilities of rhetoric are potential allies and not foes. But the emperor can only at best be argued to be the font of meaning and never actually substitute himself for the Lacanian phallus. The substitutive chain that links authority and meaning does not and can not ever fully be his. Thus one has to constantly remake and restage the argument that the authority and majesty of the emperor are true signs and that they are fundamentally bound to a real signifier. Therefore one can always imagine a break with this proposition that the emperor is majestic, yet the utmost energy is expended to ensure that just about everything but that is said.³⁹

The discourse of truth thus remains theoretically open even as certain presuppositions are never explicitly questioned. For example, we can score points off the myths of antiquity. The key and stable presupposition, though, is that of the logic of the show itself: it is a spectacle of power offered by and for a *princeps*. What one makes of individual events or of the man himself are matters that might vary, but the structure of the whole converges ever more closely upon a single point. Vespasian’s amphitheatre thus did not merely help in his goal to ‘restore’ the principate, but so too did it help to refine and perfect it. Perhaps Augustus himself would have been proud of this combination of the conservative and the revolutionary.⁴⁰

³⁹ Cf. Lacan (1988) 128–9 on ‘The King of England is an idiot’. The necessity of never uttering this censored phrase mobilises a universe of possibilities including and especially those that reveal its truth.

⁴⁰ I would like to thank William Fitzgerald for kindly allowing me to cite his unpublished work and Victoria Wohl for reading, rereading, and improving this chapter.

25. SPECTACLE AND ELITE IN THE *ARGONAUTICA* OF VALERIUS FLACCUS

Andrew Zissos

The *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus opens with a conventional-looking *praeteritio* that contrasts the chosen mythic narrative with a more overtly historical subject—in this case, the recent conquest of Jerusalem by Titus.¹ As many have noted, the announced topic of *ueterumque . . . facta uirum* ('the deeds of men of old', V. Fl. 1.11–12) echoes the opening line of Apollonius Rhodius (παλαιγενέων κλέα φωτῶν, 'the famous deeds of men of old', Ap. Rhod. 1.1) and seems to underscore the remoteness of the subject matter from the events and concerns of the present day. But these prefatory gestures are misleading in a number of respects. While there can be little doubt that Apollonius served as the primary literary model for the Flavian *Argonautica*, any reader coming to the Roman epic from its Greek predecessor cannot help but be struck by the profound gulf that separates the two poems.² In part this results from the mediating influence of Virgil—or, more precisely, Valerius' construction of his poem along Virgilian lines.³ But on a more fundamental level, the Flavian epic repeatedly registers and reflects upon its own historical moment and is consequently

¹ Titus' conquest of Jerusalem is suggested as an epic theme more suitable for Domitian, Vespasian's younger son, to tackle. Notable here is the fact that the authorial persona does not give the conventional reason—artistic incapacity—for declining to write on the military triumphs of the new dynasty.

² The difference is manifest even on the level of surface narrative. For example, taking the first book as a sample, Summers (1894) 19 notes that only about half of it corresponds to Apollonius in any way at all.

³ Adamietz (1976) 107–21 and Hardie (1989) 3–20 discuss important structural and thematic correspondences with the *Aeneid*. Cf. Mehmél (1934) 55–98, who views Valerius' poem as reproducing the atmosphere ('Stimmung') of Virgilian epic, but none of the meaning or structure—a view that is effectively critiqued by Hutchinson (1993) 222–6. For Valerius' 'classicising' Virgilian style, see, e.g., Summers (1894) 26–33; Bardon (1962) 735–9; Kleywegt (1986) 2489–90. Also significant are the poem's marked 'Iliadic' reworking of the *Argonautica* myth (on which see Barnes [1981] 360–70; Fucecchi [1996] 135–8; Fucecchi [1997] 14–18), as well as the strong Ovidian influence on Valerius' epic style (on which see, e.g., von Albrecht [1979] 46–58; Fucecchi [1997] 147–51).

informed by a very different set of cultural preoccupations than the Hellenistic *Argonautica*.⁴

As numerous critics have pointed out, the world in which Jason and his comrades move has been thoroughly 'Romanised'.⁵ The mythic narrative of the Argonautic saga takes on aspects of a cultural commentary by importing key societal constructs and tensions from contemporary—that is to say, late Flavian—Rome.⁶ In this respect, a notable feature of Valerius' poem is its use of the arena motif as a framing device for a number of important episodes. At first glance this is perhaps not an altogether surprising phenomenon, as the inherent potential for the employment of spectacle in the myth of the Argonauts is clearly considerable. Scenes such as the boxing match between Pollux and Amycus in Bebrycia and Jason's bull-wrestling in Colchis (to take just two examples) readily lend themselves to a schematised arena setting.⁷ Moreover, the amphitheatre was a cultural institution that assumed heightened importance during the Flavian period and that, in the wake of the construction of the

⁴ McGuire (1997) provides a useful preliminary exploration of the contemporary political resonances found in all three Flavian epics.

⁵ On a straightforward narrative level, Valerius can be seen to 'Romanise' his subject matter throughout: in *Argonautica* 1, for example, Jupiter is made to predict a succession of great world empires that will culminate with Rome. Other allusions to Roman history or culture in the poem include *Argonautica* 2.245 (the *Fasti*, or lists of Roman magistrates); 2.304–5 (the grove of Egeria); 2.620 (Janus); 3.417–58 (a Roman purification ceremony); 4.507–9 (the eruption of Vesuvius; cf. 3.208–9); 5.252 (an echo of the cry of a Roman general in the grove of Mars when war is declared); 6.55–6 (the *legio fulminata*); 6.402–6 (Roman civil war); 6.410 (shipwrecks on the coasts of Latium); 7.83 (Tyrrhenian merchants); 7.232 (the Tyrrhenian sea); 7.635–6 (the festival of Bellona); 8.243–6 (a Roman wedding custom). The poet gives a programmatic indication of his Romanising approach at *Argonautica* 1.21 (*haec ut Latias uox impleat urbes*, 'that this voice may fill the cities of Latium'). For a discussion of Valerius' alteration of the *Argonautica* myth in order to provide links to the Roman world, see Summers (1894) 56–7; Boyle and Sullivan (1991) 272–5.

⁶ The date of the composition of the poem and that of the poet's death remain vexed and much debated issues. For the purposes of this chapter I will assume, with the majority of scholars, a period of composition starting no later than 80 CE and ending with the poet's sudden death around 93 CE. Viable arguments can be made for a slightly earlier starting date based on the conviction that Valerius' poem is addressed to a still living Vespasian (e.g., Strand [1972] 7–38; Taylor (1994) 212–16).

⁷ Relevant here is the ingenious observation by Taylor (1994) 229 that Valerius refers to the field in which Jason wrestles the bronze bulls as the *Martius* . . . *Campus* ('Field of Mars', 7.62–3), thereby suggestively evoking the Campus Martius in Rome, site of a large wooden amphitheatre built by Nero (Tac. *Ann.* 13.31; Suet. *Nero* 12).

Colosseum, fully captured the popular imagination. Thus the prominence of the amphitheatre as a narrative element in the *Argonautica* can be seen as a natural interpenetration of epic discourse and contemporary cultural idiom.

But this is, at best, a partial explanation. The repeated deployment of the arena motif also arises from its underlying ideological function, that is, its use within the narrative to register and impact upon the socio-cultural formations of Flavian Rome. The amphitheatre became a privileged meeting place of collective Roman life during the early principate, as well as a significant site of state ritual. Although *munera* ('public shows') were increasingly under direct imperial control, they nevertheless retained strong residual aristocratic associations; as a result, the arena became a natural site for ideological contestation. This paper will argue that, through its amphitheatrical recasting of mythical narrative and its presentation of elite spectacle in this setting, Valerius' epic attempts a provisional recuperation of the arena as a space for aristocratic self-fashioning. The amphitheatrical setting is, accordingly, not a casual framing mechanism, but is rather a coding device that links individual episodes to contemporary cultural practices in an effort to carve out a positive self-image for the increasingly marginalised Roman aristocracy of Valerius' day. In other words, the recurrent use of this narrative element in the *Argonautica* is a specific production of elite Flavian culture and one that can be seen, in part, as a response to a precise socio-historic situation.

Boxing Match Bebrycia

Before exploring in greater detail the ideological implications of Valerius' use of the arena setting, it will be helpful to examine in detail one of the passages in which it is most prominently deployed, namely, the boxing match between Pollux and Amycus in Bebrycia (V. Fl. 4.99–343). The survival of abundant literary and pictorial representations suggests that the Bebrycia tale was one of the most popular episodes in the Argonautic saga.⁸ This is an episode for which Apollonius had provided an extended treatment, and Valerius

⁸ See *LIMC* s.v. 'Amycus' and cf. Gantz (1993) 348–9.

follows his Hellenistic predecessor scrupulously in basic outline (Ap. Rhod. 2.1–163).⁹ Early in their voyage to Colchis, the Argonauts land at Bebrycia (near the entrance to the Black Sea), where the monstrous king Amycus rules.¹⁰ This tyrannical figure is a savage and inhospitable son of Neptune, whose custom is to challenge all travellers of noble stature who arrive in his territory to a boxing match.¹¹ In Valerius' version this is no ordinary combat, but a fight to the death, and Amycus—a brute of enormous size and strength—has heretofore slain all his opponents, leaving the landscape strewn with the unburied skeletons of the vanquished.¹² When the Argonauts are confronted by the Bebrycian king, Pollux immediately volunteers to fight on their behalf and following the selection of gloves, the boxing match begins. The fight hangs in the balance during an indecisive first round, but in the second round Pollux' superior boxing skills overcome the brute force of Amycus and the giant collapses to the ground under a deadly flurry of blows. The Bebrycians disperse and the Argonauts celebrate Pollux' splendid victory with a sacrifice and feast.¹³

⁹ The account of Theocritus (*Id.* 22.27–134) is rather different from that of Apollonius and follows the tradition of the epic poet Peisandros and Epicharmos, whose dramatic poem *Amykos* survives in fragmentary form. According to this tradition, Amycus is more of an ogre than a king and he survives the boxing match. Castor and Pollux come upon him sitting by a spring, from which he refuses to let them drink until they have boxed with him. The terms of the contest are simply that the winner may do as he wishes with the loser; after defeating Amycus, Pollux extracts a promise from the bully that he will never abuse strangers again. (The lost Sophoclean satyr play *Amykos* may also have followed this tradition.)

¹⁰ Valerius follows Apollonius in placing the Amycus adventure prior to the Symplegades; Theocritus locates it after. Apollodorus (1.9.20) is in agreement with the Apollonian version, as often.

¹¹ In some respects Theocritus' Amycus cuts a more sympathetic figure. In particular, the motif of the giant shrinking as he is being decisively pummelled by Pollux (Theoc. 22.112–13) ends the tale on a somewhat pathetic note. This element is absent from both Apollonius' and Valerius' version. It is the vast size of Amycus, his huge sprawling mass that makes his defeat by Pollux a distinctly 'epic' accomplishment.

¹² The fatal nature of the combat is not attested before Apollonius, who may have invented the death of Amycus; pictorial art suggests that the version of Theoc. *Id.* 22, in which Amycus is defeated and bound, was conventional.

¹³ The dispersal of the Bebrycians without a fight in Valerius' version following the death of Amycus (2.315–16) is a notable deviation from Apollonius, where they attempt to avenge their king. This adjustment carries an obvious ideological charge, suggesting the emotional distance of the *populus* from their king (a point adumbrated earlier, at 2.157–8).

Although clearly indebted to Apollonius in basic outline, the Flavian version nevertheless significantly refashions the episode, emphasising the technical aspects of the fight and locating the action within an identifiable amphitheatrical setting. In order to register the spectacular affiliations of the episode, the narrative presents a suggestive proliferation of internal audiences. In addition to the various gods who follow at least some of the action, Valerius provides three distinct groups of spectators: the Argonauts themselves, the Bebrycians and, most intriguingly, a large number of shades—Amycus' former victims, in fact—who are allowed by Dis to venture to the upper world in order to watch the boxing match:

... pater orantis caesorum Tartarus umbras
nube caua tandem ad merita spectacula pugnae
emittit.

(Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica* 4.258–60)

At their request father Tartarus sends forth the shades of the slain in a hollow cloud to witness the spectacle of the much-deserved fight.

This third internal audience has no counterpart in Apollonius Rhodius and is almost certainly a Valerian innovation.¹⁴ The shades are mentioned here not as fully operative characters *per se*, but rather serve to provide a setting or backdrop for the narrative action that follows. Significantly, these ghostly spectators sit on the surrounding mountain tops and thereby darken them: *summi nigrescunt culmina montis* ('the mountain tops grow black with them', V. Fl. 4.260). This detail establishes a suggestive physical correspondence to the spatial organisation of the amphitheatre, which likewise located the audience in an elevated physical area around the locus of combat. Moreover, through the implication of an uncountable number of ghostly spectators covering the mountain *tops*, the narrative schematically reproduces the anonymous mass audience that occupied the upper tiers of seating in contemporary arena events.¹⁵ Finally, the specific designation of the fight as a spectacle (*spectacula*, 4.259) provides a more overt reference to the amphitheatrical framing of the episode.

¹⁴ Korn (1989) 174.

¹⁵ In other words, the arrangement can be seen to enact a kind of physical segregation according to textual status, which mirrors the status-segregation of the contemporary amphitheatrical audience.

The account of the boxing match itself (V. Fl. 4.261–314) is one of the most vivid pieces of narration in extant Roman epic and is endowed with a greater realism than is found in other extant versions.¹⁶ Valerius' account provides a rich technical exposition of the fight, which forcefully evokes the contemporary Roman amphitheatre and thus assimilates the reader's experience to that of an arena spectator. A brief examination will reveal the striking extent to which the episode has been refashioned as an arena contest.¹⁷

The combat that Valerius describes involves two fighters of markedly different styles. Modern boxing analysts would speak of a 'boxer', which is to say, a technically proficient, well-schooled pugilist confronting a 'power puncher', that is, a fighter who relies simply on his own toughness and the forcefulness of his blows.¹⁸ The contrast is heightened in Valerius' text by the vast difference in size: Amycus is a giant, whereas Pollux is of normal, if athletic, stature.¹⁹ The fight begins with Amycus charging forward and unleashing a succession of powerful blows. But Pollux is alert to the danger and skilfully dodges the larger man's frontal assault with a series of evasive manoeuvres.²⁰ He fights at a distance, using his mobility and staying on his

¹⁶ Kröner (1968) 733–54 convincingly refutes the contention of Mehmél (1934) 41–54 that Valerius' description of the fight is simply an artistic failure. Mehmél criticisms are i) the passage is not artistically unified; ii) the fight is illogical in sequence; iii) the account often lacks clarity. As Kröner demonstrates, these judgements betray both an insufficient grasp of Valerius' artistic purpose and an inadequate knowledge of boxing.

¹⁷ Similarly, in the Trials of Aeetes in *Argonautica* 7 Valerius emphasises the aspects with amphitheatrical equivalents—namely, the wrestling match with the bulls and the slaughter of the earth-born men. By contrast, Valerius reduces the sowing of the dragon's teeth (which does not have an amphitheatrical equivalent) to a mere three lines (7.607–9; compare the more elaborate account at Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 3.1313–45). This suggests that the poet is stressing those events that resonate with contemporary spectacle.

¹⁸ The technical proficiency of Pollux as a boxer is neatly anticipated by the description of him in the catalogue at *Argonautica* 1.420–2, where he is presented very much as a dedicated fighter-in-training, who brings his gloves along so that he may shadow-box even during the voyage.

¹⁹ The difference in size is nicely enhanced by an age differential. Amycus' physical maturity is contrasted to Pollux' lingering traces of adolescence: *nec fronte truce[m] nec mole tremendum, / uixdum etiam primae spargentem signa iuuentae* ('neither savage of countenance nor fearsome in size—in fact, barely showing signs of early manhood', V. Fl. 4.232–3).

²⁰ In not succumbing to Amycus' (clearly habitual) initial assault, it appears that Pollux takes advantage of the 'scouting report' provided by the castaway Dymas (V. Fl. 4.164–7).

toes (*semper et in digitis*, V. Fl. 4.267) to keep out of harm's way. The inherent superiority of skill over brute force is strongly suggested in this sequence. Once Amycus' initial aggression has dissipated harmlessly (*urgentes effudit nubibus iras*, 'he expended his urgent wrath upon the clouds', 4.273), Pollux rises in slow degrees to the attack. A particularly authentic detail here is the description of Amycus, exhausted by his futile assault, breathing through an open mouth (*hiatu*, 4.277). Following a recuperative pause, a second round of fighting begins with both combatants reinvigorated. They manoeuvre to no particular effect until Pollux, distracting his opponent with a feint, delivers a hard blow to Amycus' face. Seeing this, the Argonauts raise a cheer, which causes a stronger emotional reaction in Amycus than the actual blow.²¹ Indeed, Amycus' subsequent recklessness is specifically attributed to his irritation at the partisan spectators: *respectat ouantes/quippe procul Minyas* ('for he sees the Argonauts cheering from a distance', 4.297–8).²² With this original touch, the complex psychological dynamic of the Roman amphitheatre—and the important role of the audience therein—is insinuated into the scene. Shortly after, sensing Amycus' total loss of self-control, Pollux steps in for the decisive

²¹ In Apollonius, by contrast, the Greek heroes do not cheer until the fight is over (*Argon.* 2.96–7). It is perhaps worth mentioning here that most of the Argonauts in Valerius' epic have no narrative significance as individual figures. The poem focuses on a relatively small number of central characters and a surprising number of Argonauts receive individual mention only in the catalogue of *Argonautica* 1. As a result, the majority of the fifty-two Argonauts tend to serve as a internal audience, in attendance whenever one or two of their comrades are called upon to perform a heroic feat. For example, when Zeetes and Calais undertake their aerial duel with the Harpies, Valerius emphasises the fifty-odd crewmates who watch the spectacle unfold (4.505–6). In the Flavian *Argonautica*, in other words, to be a minor Argonaut is to be a spectator, to be a major one is to be a performer. The virtual anonymity of most of the Argonauts turns them into an ideal internal audience, a registering apparatus for the actions of the central figures of the epic. At the same time, an important function of the permanent *de facto* internal audience in the epic is to discourage the negative modes of spectatorship that are often associated with the arena. In effect, the internal audience provides an encoded paradigm for 'reading' the amphitheatrical episodes that disallows a cold and disinvested mentality: this is seen clearly in the emotional involvement of the internal audience at *Argonautica* 7.573–75, as well as in the present episode. Through this device, the potential slip-page from socially symbolic spectacle to dispassionate pleasure is effectively forestalled.

²² Kröner (1968) 747 is surely mistaken in his characterisation of Pollux' caution here as a 'low point' for the Greek hero. In fact, Pollux's circumspection here demonstrates Valerius' understanding of a principle familiar to modern boxers, namely, that a fighter is at his most dangerous immediately after being hit by a stinging blow. As with other details, this touch enhances the stark realism of the passage.

assault. Carefully choosing his moment, he delivers a forceful series of blows and the giant collapses to the ground, dead.²³

In Valerius' *Argonautica*, then, the Bebrycia episode has been recast as a recognisable arena event. The text draws its readers into the scene and invites them to experience it not merely in a schematic or impressionistic fashion but rather in the more immediate manner of spectators.²⁴ By recreating the physical environment and reproducing the roles of both performer and audience, the narrative generates an almost visceral amphitheatrical experience. Indeed, the carefully elaborated combat narrative, with its abundance of precise technical details, must have reminded many contemporary readers of fights in the arena that they themselves had witnessed.²⁵ The passage, in short, effects a radical merging of Flavian realism with fantastic mythological content via the framing device of the amphitheatre.²⁶

Having established the intricate amphitheatrical framing and texture of the episode, it will be useful to draw some preliminary con-

²³ In Apollonius, Amycus is brought down by a single deadly blow above the ear (κόψε μεταξύδην ὑπὲρ οὐατος ὅστέα δ' εἶσω/ρήξεν, 'rushing in, he struck him above the ear, shattering his skull', Ap. Rhod. 2.95–6). Valerius avoids the implausibility of a smallish boxer killing a much larger opponent with a single blow and chooses to have Amycus instead succumb to a fatal accumulation of blows (V. Fl. 4.303–11).

²⁴ Boxing appears to have been a very popular event in Rome (e.g., Hor. *Ep.* 2.1.186; Ov. *Tr.* 4.6.31–2; Suet. *Aug.* 45.3, *Calig.* 18.1, *Ner.* 45.1; and see Balsdon (1969) 288, 330). With Valerius' rich technical exposition, we might contrast Lucan's use of spectacle in, for example, the Scaeva episode, to get a sense of how much restraint and verisimilitude adheres to the Flavian poet's description of the combat. Valerius has an abiding interest in the technical details and he gets them right.

²⁵ It is worth recalling here that the ancient world had no concept of weight divisions for combat sports, so that, as in the case of Pollux and Amycus, fighters of vastly discrepant sizes regularly competed against one another. Note also that at 1.420–1 Valerius has Pollux wearing the Roman *caestus*, weighted with lead, rather than the lighter (and less damaging) Greek ἱμαντῆς ('leather straps')—an anachronistic touch, which again suggests the influence of the contemporary arena here.

²⁶ Kröner (1968) 740. Likewise in the trial with the bulls—another spectacle—Valerius' Jason is a much less incredible and far more realistic figure than Apollonius' hero. A particularly realistic touch is that the bulls do not initially notice Jason and he must get their attention (this authentic detail may indeed have come from the arena—it should not be taken as a sign that Jason's heroism is being impugned in an Ovidian manner). As Hull (1979) 410 notes, Valerius is more interested than Apollonius in the technical process of subduing the bulls and devotes considerably more space to this description. Hull (1979) 401 further suggests that 'possibly [the poet's] interest had been quickened by watching such exploits in the Roman arena, where there is some evidence to show that men wrestled with bulls'. Hull (1979) 401 cites Plin. *HN* 8.162; Suet. *Claud.* 21.3; Mart. *Spect.* 16B.2, 27.3–6. See also Balsdon (1969) 306–7, 309.

clusions before moving on. To begin with, it is worth noting that the episode associates the spectacle in question with a positive morality—that is to say, a principle of justice (cf. *meritae* . . . *pugnae*, V. Fl. 4.259, quoted above). The death of Amycus avenges his slaughter of countless earlier victims (4.181–6) and prevents any further butchery in Bebrycia. At the same time, the scene is located within the ultimate horizon of collective human history, defining a crucial moment in Jupiter's overarching cosmic plan. As Hardie observes, Amycus is 'an outmoded and remote survival from the order of things before the rule of Jupiter, a pocket of resistance to be mopped up by the Argo'.²⁷ Furthermore, the carefully delineated opposition between the *furor* of Amycus (4.293) and the *ratio* of Pollux evokes a fundamental dichotomy between civilisation and savagery and thematises the triumph of skill and rationality—the cornerstones of Pollux' victory—over barbarism.²⁸ The death of Amycus establishes a new moral order in Bebrycia by putting an end to the savage king's brutality and human sacrifice, instituting more civilised ritual in its place.²⁹ In other words, what transpires in the schematised

²⁷ Hardie (1993a) 84–5. Along these lines, it is highly significant that at *Argonautica* 4.221–2 Amycus links himself to the Clashing Rocks and declares himself to be an enemy of the age of navigation. He thus places himself in explicit opposition to the mission of the Argonauts, as announced in the first line of the poem, which is the opening up of the sea to navigation (*prima* . . . *freta peruia*, 'the first crossing of the seas', V. Fl. 1.1). The savage king thereby declares himself an enemy of Jupiter's new world order, of which the Argonauts are the human agents.

²⁸ Cf. Theoc. *Id.* 22, where the skill differential is less conspicuous (for example, both fighters rather cunningly attempt to manoeuvre in order to put the sun in their opponent's eyes). In Valerius, Pollux's patient, scientific approach to the fight and his ability to study his opponent and learn his patterns are carefully contrasted to Amycus' emotional reactions (4.284–5). Like a good Roman general, Pollux carefully scrutinises his wild and unsystematic opponent and gains knowledge of his fighting methods (*noto* . . . *hoste*, 'his foe was now known to him', 4.284) before engaging him directly. Amycus' inability to contain his emotions during the fight is repeatedly contrasted to Pollux' self-mastery; here we see the privileging of the rational, systematising functions of the mind over older, more primitive impulses. When the match is over and Amycus lies dead, the Argonauts give a cheer for the success of 'the fruitful lessons of [the victor's] first teacher' (*primi felix labor ille magistri*, V. Fl. 4. 329).

²⁹ In the opening passage of the episode, Bebrycia is described rather cryptically as 'a good friend to sturdy bulls' (*duris regio non inuida tauris*, V. Fl. 4.100). This is understood most naturally as a reference to the pre-agricultural status of Amycus' realm, but a second, somewhat ironic, sense emerges later in the episode when it comes to light that Amycus is in the habit of offering human sacrifice to his father Neptune (4.150–3). The irony is of course that Amycus' slaughter of humans as if they were mere cattle (*ceu* . . . *segnes ad iniqua altaria tauros*, 'like sluggish bulls at the

arena of *Argonautica* 4 is not just a dramatic combat between two individuals, but rather the positive unfolding of a larger human destiny.

The Politics of the Argonautica

In its exploitation of an arena setting the Amycus episode is far from unique in Valerius' poem. Amphitheatrical elements also figure with striking prominence, for example, in the Colchian civil war narrative of *Argonautica* 6, where Juno masterfully 'reinvents' the conflict as a spectacle in order to afford it relevance to the larger narrative.³⁰ In the remarkable textual sequence beginning at *Argonautica* 6.427, Medea is gradually transformed by the goddess into a spectator of what has suddenly become, in effect, a schematised gladiatorial show, with Jason as the star performer.³¹ The familiar Argonautic theme of forbidden attraction is thus played out in an amphitheatrical set-

cruel altars', 4.151) means that bulls are relatively safe in Bebrycia. Valerius is offering a cultural register here: human sacrifice is a common element of barbaric society in the 'rise of civilisation' historical model. That is, to those historical frameworks that assign a positive valuation to the progress of civilisation, human sacrifice is specifically one of the things that all civilised peoples must overcome; it is, in short, the quintessential barbaric act. Hence it is significant that the first act of the Argonauts following Pollux's victory is to offer *animal* sacrifice to the god Neptune (4.338). With this gesture, the heroes displace Amycus' human sacrifice with animal sacrifice, thereby instituting 'civilised' ritual where barbaric ritual had previously been practised.

³⁰ Summers (1894) 59 astutely describes the battle scenes as constituting 'a literary gladiatorial show'—though he sees them as merely 'a concession to the taste of the age'.

³¹ In her speech of persuasion to Medea (V. Fl. 6.484–7), the goddess underscores the unique spectacle offered by the war, due to the participation of the Greek heroes. She points to a substantial crowd (*cetera . . . turba*, 'the rest of the folk', 6.484–5) gathered on the walls, which at once suggests the reconfiguration of battle as a kind of mass entertainment. Juno urges Medea to join the rest of the populace, enticing her with the exotic nature of the spectacle. Indeed, through the description of entranced Colchian spectators simply enjoying the action, without any sense that the city is imperiled by the war outside its walls, Juno's description pointedly subverts the tragic historical *topos* of women, children and the elderly watching from the walls as a battle is fought around the city—the use of the verb *fruiturque* ('takes delight in') is notable in this context. Cf. Fucecchi (1997) 124 *ad* 6.485: 'Nel suo racconto Giunone-Calcioppe esalta le attrattive dello spettacolo'. By suspending any sense of anxiety on the part of the civilian onlookers, Juno presents the scene as pure spectacle and thereby underscores the amphitheatrical reframing of the action. This new perspective on events is not simply a rhetorical device on the part of the goddess, but rather signals a fundamental realignment of the narrative.

ting and this mechanism sets in motion the crucial winning of the Colchian princess' aid for Jason.³² Juno's complex transformation of the ostensible narrative 'function' of the civil war thus amounts to something like an act of poetic self-consciousness, underscoring the programmatic centrality of spectacle to Valerius' epic.³³

The reinscription of these and other important episodes within an amphitheatrical setting suggests that a specific cultural code is at work in the Flavian *Argonautica*. In order to identify precise ideological resonances, it will be helpful to provide a more detailed reconstruction of the poem's socio-cultural context. This will establish both the specificity and intelligibility of this recurring narrative strategy and also make clear the extent to which the epic is embedded in its own historical moment.

From the very opening of the narrative, the Flavian *Argonautica* poem articulates with remarkable consistency a precise political perspective as well as a specific discourse of identity—namely, that of an increasingly marginalised Roman aristocracy. Epic remains in the imperial period a genre with strong residual aristocratic affiliations.³⁴

³² Through the focalisation of Medea, the reader is thus forced to take a specifically amphitheatrical perspective on the battle. Though Medea attempts to take in the wider scope of the battle (e.g., V. Fl. 6.584, 657–8, 718ff.), she is unable to look at anything beyond Jason. In other words, through this divinely constrained focalisation, the narrative is reduced to a series of single combats, a kind of gladiatorial show featuring a single aristocratic 'star' performer: *saeuus ibi miserae solusque occurrit Iason* ('there fierce Jason and no one else met the gaze of the poor girl', 6.586). In a magnificently studied touch, the battle narrative comes to a close with a short list of various warriors in action whom Medea is *not* paying any attention to (6.717–20). This intriguing Lucanesque negative enumeration underscores the amphitheatrical reprocessing of the scene, which has transformed the large-scale battle into a spectacle with a single focal point. Through this authorial gesture, the amphitheatrical reprocessing of the larger battle narrative is laid bare. To be sure, the motif of forbidden attraction to a gladiator would have had strong resonances for a contemporary audience, evoking precisely the kind of social disruptions that accrue in Colchis (for the motif, cf., e.g., Juv. *Sat.* 6.82–114).

³³ Considered purely from a generic standpoint, of course, there is a certain deflation in this reconception. Cf. Feeney (1991) 326: 'The poem's great set-piece battle book is undermined, to become only an occasion for the girl to fall in love with her future husband'.

³⁴ There is no external evidence for the social standing of Valerius and consequently scholars have turned to the *Argonautica* itself for evidence. Of such 'internal clues', most compelling is a reference in the proem to the 'Cymaeon prophethess' and the mention of the Sibyl's tripod residing in the poet's own house (V. Fl. 1.5–7). These lines have led to the conjecture that Valerius was one of the priests in charge of the Sibylline books, the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*. This hypothesis gains some marginal support from the allusion to the Bath of Cybele at *Argonautica* 8.239–41,

According to the traditional Roman view, epic was about *reges et proelia* ('heroes and battles')—that is, about precisely those mythical deeds of conquest and human advancement with which the Roman elite had always identified itself.³⁵ But the view of history traditionally inscribed in Roman epic—that of a heroic aristocracy—is subjected to increasing ideological pressure in the Flavian period.³⁶ One of the central conflicts within elite Roman culture at this time was the incompatibility between Roman aristocratic ambition and desire for public distinction on the one hand and the new realities of the political configurations of the principate on the other. This contemporary tension surfaces almost immediately in Valerius' narrative, when Jason's heroism and popular renown are presented as problematic for the tyrant Pelias: *instat fama uiri uirtusque haud laeta tyranno* ('the renown of the man weighed upon him, as did his valour, which is never pleasing to a tyrant', V. Fl. 1.30). This is a striking divergence from the traditional version of the myth, in which the quest for the golden fleece was Jason's first notable deed.³⁷ The deviation creates a telling correspondence with contemporary Rome, where aristocratic exercise of authority or pursuit of military glory was likewise decidedly double-edged; indeed, it was a commonplace of the first century that too much military success would draw the hostile attention of the emperor.³⁸ Thus, at its very outset, the Flavian *Argo-*

a rite that was supervised by the *quindecimviri*, but the hazards of extracting autobiographical details from this kind of evidence are obvious. In terms of the ideology of the text, of course, what matters is the authorial pose as someone belonging to a priesthood whose members were drawn almost exclusively from Rome's most noble families.

³⁵ For Valerius' (conventional) use of the term *rex* ('king', but also 'great man', 'aristocrat', 'hero') to designate nobility rather than royalty, see below, note 87.

³⁶ Intriguingly, Valerius may allude to the growing popular disinterest in epic at 1.843–5. More generally, it would appear that, along with the traditional aristocracy, the traditional aristocratic genre is in decline in the Flavian period. McGuire (1997) 243–5 finds reflections on the increasing marginalisation of epic in contemporary culture in the other Flavian epicists. Also relevant here is Martial's programmatic subversion of the conventional generic hierarchy that privileges epic and in particular his observation, at *Epigrams* 4.49.10, that lofty poetry is praised but not read.

³⁷ It is also significant that in Valerius' version the traditional prophecy of the man with one sandal (Pind. *Pyth.* 4.74–6; Ap. Rhod. 1.8–11) has been suppressed in order to emphasise Pelias' fear of Jason as a potential political rival.

³⁸ The idea that 'bad' emperors detested *uirtus* in their subjects was a commonplace of imperial writers; with *Argonautica* 1.30 compare, e.g., Tac. *Ann.* 11.20 and *Agr.* 41, where Domitian is described as *infensus uirtutibus princeps* ('a leader hostile to deeds of bravery'). On the prevalence of such notions, see further Hopkins (1983)

nautica signals a reprocessing of the traditional mythic material in ways that resonate with the concerns of the Roman nobility of the imperial period.

A little later, the poem establishes an even stronger symbolic equivalence between its hero and the contemporary Roman aristocrat, as latent political tensions in Flavian Rome are given a further indirect expression on the narrative level. This occurs when Jason, ordered by Pelias to retrieve the golden fleece, carefully considers his options. Upon recognising that the tyrant is craftily engineering his destruction, Jason's first impulse is to raise a rebellion:

heu quid agat? populumne leuem ueterique tyranno
infensum atque olim miserantes Aesona patres
aduocet . . . ?

(Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica* 1.71–3)

Ah what is he to do? Should he call to his aid the fickle people, already hostile to the old tyrant, and the *patres*, who once pitied Aeson . . . ?

The stratification of a fictive Thessalian society into distinct segments or power blocs—*populus* ('the people'), *tyrannus* ('tyrant', 'monarch'), *patres* ('senators')—serves to transform the mythic picture by evoking contemporary political realities. Indeed, the use of the term *patres* ('senators') in this mythological context invests the scene with an obvious Roman flavour.³⁹ More precisely, the existence of senators as a specific political body and a potential source of support against a single monarch succinctly reproduces the political configuration of the early principate.⁴⁰ In other words, the poem here brings to the

121. It is worth pointing out that Valerius' stress here on Jason's established reputation for courage not only goes against the traditional picture of Jason as an untried youth, but also contradicts Valerius' later depiction of Jason at 3.80–2. The inconsistency here carries an obvious political charge; for a more general discussion of such narrative contradictions, see Zissos (1999) 289–301.

³⁹ Cf. Langen (1896–7) 29 *ad* 1.72: 'recte intelleguntur nobiles, quasi senatores'; similar retrojections of contemporary political reality are found at *Argonautica* 1.761; 5.269, 464; 8.281.

⁴⁰ The one unnamed element in the equation is the military, whose support of the tyrant Pelias must be inferred from the opening line of the narrative (V. Fl. 1.22, quoted below). Valerius' narrative only implies what all knew—namely, that the power of the princeps rested on his control of the army. Within the civic ideology of the early principate, of course, this truth could not be openly acknowledged. Hence an intriguing split emerged between 'practical' and 'discursive' consciousness—a split reflected in the present passage. By acknowledging the army in an earlier aside, but keeping it out of the systematic account of the Roman political sphere in *Argonautica* 1.71–3, where only the three 'legitimate' sectors of society are

surface the various polarisations in the socio-political fabric of Flavian Rome. Intriguingly, the thought of leading the *patres* in rebellion is a fleeting one, which fades from consciousness altogether before it can be seriously entertained. In this way, the poem offers a disconcertingly accurate picture of an atrophied senatorial class, no longer in possession of a stable power-base and thus ultimately impotent in its anger and resentment against a despotic ruler.⁴¹ The brief scene in the opening book of the *Argonautica* thus provides a trenchant reflection of the enduring political tensions between emperor and non-imperial elite in the late first century, along with a familiar pattern of mingled accommodation and resistance on the part of the latter.⁴²

From these early passages, then, it emerges that the conditions of possibility for the composition of the *Argonautica* arise in the wake of an irreversible political transition after which the old possibilities and freedoms of the republic are no longer seen as viable—though they are not yet inconceivable.⁴³ Valerius presents a political system in which the mechanisms of domination exploited by the tyrant are pervasive and are aimed at further restricting the vestiges of aristocratic status and power.

The concluding episode of the first book, featuring the ‘political suicide’ of Jason’s parents, is yet another scene rich in contemporary resonances. In this passage, which constitutes one of the most noteworthy divergences from Apollonius’ account, Pelias orders the execution of Jason’s father shortly after the *Argo* has set sail with

mentioned, Valerius’ text precisely reproduces the contemporary anxieties and discursive warps over the role of the army in the early principate.

⁴¹ In the words of Starr (1954) 127, the effective political opposition of the aristocracy to the principate as an institution ‘had long since come to a whimpering end’ by the Flavian period. No significant faction of the senate any longer seriously entertained the notion of restoring the republic. This historical reality is powerfully reinforced at the end of the book when Aeson, like his son, fleetingly entertains the possibility of raising a rebellion (V. Fl. 1.761), before he settling on suicide as the best course of action. On that scene, see discussion below.

⁴² The pattern of mingled accommodation and resistance is seen most clearly in Jason’s decision to undertake the mission as Pelias orders, but at the same time to lure Acastus, the tyrant’s son, into joining the expedition, clearly against his father’s wishes (V. Fl. 1.149–83; cf. 1.53–4). In the event, this works out disastrously for Jason’s family.

⁴³ It should be noted that Valerius’ stance vis-à-vis the principate represents a significant shift from Lucan’s (Neronian) epic, which repeatedly expresses a utopian yearning for the republic and hence is clearly not yet fully resigned to a figurative resolution of the plight of the Roman aristocracy within an imperial political framework.

his son Acastus on board (V. Fl. 1.700–29).⁴⁴ Upon hearing the news, Aeson and his wife Alcimede decide to anticipate the death sentence by taking their own lives rather than wait for the arrival of the executioners (1.730–73).⁴⁵ Once again, the passage bears a clear contemporary stamp. The poet has created a death scene all too familiar to the nobles of the early principate, a scene repeatedly recorded in Tacitus' scathing narrative of the period.⁴⁶ As McGuire notes, the suicide of Aeson and Alcimede suggestively reproduces many of the details found in the historical accounts—the monarch's death sentence itself, the choice of the wife to die with her husband, the arrival of troops or magistrates at the home of the condemned, and the striking disjunction between the private circumstances of the suicide and the overtly public status of the executioners.⁴⁷

From its very opening, then, the Flavian *Argonautica* appears as a narrative that manifests an immense charge of anxiety. The poem reveals throughout a preoccupation with the increasingly bitter realities of elite life under the principate, along with an acute awareness of on-going, incremental modifications to the Roman socio-political order and their inevitable, detrimental consequences for the nobility. Politically charged narrative elements such as tyranny and resistance, political suicide and dissimulation are pervasive.⁴⁸

The ubiquity of the figure of the tyrant, always scheming against potential rivals and thus inclined to self-serving violence, is a notable

⁴⁴ It was more usual for Aeson to be alive for Jason's homecoming, and some versions (e.g., Ov. *Met.* 7.159–296) describe him magically rejuvenated by his newly acquired daughter-in-law Medea. Aside from Valerius, the episode of Aeson's suicide is found only in Apollodorus (1.27) and Diodorus Siculus (4.50). More important for present purposes is Valerius' innovative placement of the episode at such an early stage in the narrative and also its investment with powerful contemporary socio-political overtones, as discussed below.

⁴⁵ This seemingly sensible decision turns out badly: when Pelias' henchmen arrive and find Aeson and Alcimede already close to death, they vent their frustration by butchering Jason's younger brother Promachus (V. Fl. 1.818–26). For the epic's ambivalent perspective on political suicide, see McGuire (1997) 189–97.

⁴⁶ See Taylor (1994) 233–5; McGuire (1997) 192–3, citing Tac. *Ann.* 11.3 (the suicide of Asiaticus), 15.61–4 (Seneca), 16.18–19 (Petronius), 16.33–5 (Thrasea Paetus).

⁴⁷ McGuire (1997) 192–3.

⁴⁸ Valuable discussions on all these elements in McGuire (1997); on dissimulation in particular, see Hershkowitz (1998b) 242–74, esp. 270: 'Greek-style cunning, admirable if morally ambiguous when employed by Apollonius' men and women, has been replaced by Roman empire-style dissimulation, with all the difficulties and dangers it entails, accompanied by a longing for a return to Roman republican self-control, exemplified by figures like Aeson and Hypsipyle'.

feature of Valerius' epic.⁴⁹ The Flavian *Argonautica* presents the tyrant as the only political being consistently capable of retaining and exploiting power.⁵⁰ At its very inception Valerius' narrative gives concrete form to this troubling ideogeme in its description of Pelias:⁵¹

Haemoniam primis Pelias frenabat ab annis,
iam grauis et longus populis metus.

(Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica* 1.22–3)

From his earliest years Pelias, now old and long the terror of nations, had ruled Haemonia.⁵²

The emphasis on rule through fear (*metus*) underscores the harshness of Pelias' reign and marks him as a quintessential tyrant.⁵³ Moreover, as just indicated, Pelias is but the first of a series of such figures presented in the poem. Others are encountered by the Argonauts at various stages of their journey—for example, Laomedon at Troy, Amycus at Bebrycia, Aeetes at Colchis.⁵⁴ Indeed, the multiplication of tyrannical figures is signalled on something like a metanarrative level by Jason's outburst to Aeetes upon finding himself double-crossed at the beginning of *Argonautica* 7:⁵⁵

... 'alium hic Pelian, alia aequora cerno.
quin agite et hoc omnes odiisque urgete tyranni
imperisque caput: numquam mihi dextera nec spes
defuerit. mos iussa pati nec cedere duris.'

(Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica* 7.92–5)

'I see here another Pelias, another ocean. But come, let all tyrants vent their anger and exercise their commands upon my head! Neither my right hand nor my hope will fail me: my custom is to endure, not to yield to hardships.'

⁴⁹ For the anti-imperial force of such figures, see McGuire (1997) 27–9.

⁵⁰ McGuire (1997) xii, noting a similar pattern in the epics of Statius and Silius.

⁵¹ Following Jameson (1981) 76, the term 'ideogeme' is understood as 'the smallest intelligible unit of the essentially antagonistic collective discourses of social classes'.

⁵² Translated by Mozley (1934).

⁵³ Valerius' choice of the verb *frenabat* ('ruled', but also 'bridled', 'curbed') to describe Pelias' exercise of power is also relevant; cf. Langen (1896–97) 21 *ad* 23: *frenabat scripsit poeta ad indicandum durum Peliae imperium* ('the poet wrote *bridled* in order to indicate the harshness of Pelias' rule'; my emphasis).

⁵⁴ These figures are explicitly identified as *tyranni* ('tyrants') at *Argonautica* 2.577, 4.751 and 5.624 respectively.

⁵⁵ For a reading of these lines as part of a pro-Flavian political allegory, see Taylor (1994) 219–33.

By presenting the figure of the tyrant as populating virtually all of the regions visited by the Argonauts, the narrative seems to assert the very pervasiveness—and indeed the utter banality—of this ideologeme.⁵⁶ It thereby suggests in the most general terms not merely the inherent perversity, but also the inevitability of the new Roman political order. This amounts to a historical diagnosis that transcends individual situations and judgements in order to underscore the reality that there was in the Flavian period no longer a viable alternative to the principate. After the fall of Nero there had been no senatorial debate on the restoration of the republic as there had been following the death of Caligula; the Flavian dynasty signalled the effective end of the republican dream.

But if revolutionary opposition by the elite was no longer realistic, it certainly did not follow that the non-imperial nobility granted moral assent to the Principate. The widespread discontent of the elite is reflected in the *Argonautica* by the surprisingly large number of negative *sententiae* (a device that Valerius otherwise uses very sparingly) associated with the tyrant.⁵⁷ The ideological perspective of the displaced nobility is rhetorically reinforced by the very pervasiveness of this kind of ethical marker. Indeed, through the use of such textual devices the poem adumbrates an oppositional perspective that subtly challenges the dominant imperial value system of the principate without sounding a futile call to revolution. The epic is thus very much a product of its historical moment and socio-political point of origin. The establishment of a *de facto* monarchy had diminished the power and status of Roman aristocrats both as individuals and (through the progressive weakening of the power and initiative of the senate) as a collective political body.⁵⁸ In many respects, the

⁵⁶ It is notable that the only exceptions to tyranny in the epic are the benevolent monarchies in Lemnos and Cyzicus, both of which meet with disaster.

⁵⁷ E.g., *Argonautica* 1.30, 4.158, 5.264–5, 5.536. This represents a large fraction of the dozen *sententiae* that Summers (1894) 61 finds in the entire poem.

⁵⁸ On individual status, cf. Hopkins (1983) 176: 'The original status pyramid of Roman stratification was altered in the principate to incorporate power-holders from outside the senate. They held their power by virtue of their personal closeness to the emperor. They did not come from the highest strata of society. In the worst instances (from the aristocratic point of view) they were slaves and freedmen.' On the erosion of the senate, see, e.g., Millar (1977) 275–83. By Domitian's reign, the emperor himself had subsumed many of the senate's earlier prerogatives, including the right to enact laws (now done by imperial edict) and the authority to appoint candidates for public office. Equally corrosive was the development of a palace

Flavian period saw an acceleration of these trends, as fundamental socio-political formations in elite society were put under increasing strain. On the one hand, there was an evident hardening of the apparatus of the principate, a progressive dismantling of the face-saving republican façade by which the real power hierarchy had been dissimulated, with the result that the simple realities of power were laid bare.⁵⁹ On the other, there was a more obvious devaluation of the perceived status and importance of the traditional Roman upper classes.⁶⁰ Vespasian came from a relatively undistinguished family: according to Suetonius, he emphasised his *ignobilitas* and was the first emperor to do so.⁶¹ In addition, Vespasian was more vigorous than his predecessors in his efforts to reconstitute the aristocracy, elevating many non-senatorial supporters to the status of ex-praetor.⁶² Compounding these trends were the diminishing oppor-

administration, operated by non-senators, which served as a new locus of power and increasingly undermined the functional importance of the senate. In general terms, the early years of the principate are characterised by a general pattern of encroachment of imperial functionaries and in particular of non-senatorial provincial governors (that is, those assigned to imperial provinces).

⁵⁹ In its grant of imperial power to Vespasian in 69 CE the much-discussed *Lex de Imperio* dispensed with the senate's face-saving formalities by retroactively confirming as the legitimate actions of a *princeps* all the decisions Vespasian had made and all the laws he had passed since first being hailed by his troops. From the point of view of the senate, of course, Vespasian was still an illegitimate pretender to the throne during this period, their approval only occurring officially with the passing of the *Lex*. The point was a symbolic one: the hailing of the army was given precedence over the bestowal of authority by the senate, which could only confirm retrospectively the choice of the soldiers. This effectively dispensed with the fiction that a princeps began his reign when he received his powers from the senate. Rather less subtle was Domitian's practice, reported by Suetonius (*Dom.* 13.2), of having himself referred to as *dominus et deus* ('lord and god'). Although the veracity of Suetonius' statement has been called into question by modern historians (see, e.g., Jones [1992] 107–9), its very plausibility for the imperial biographer is in itself sufficiently telling. For a general discussion of the gradual emergence of the latent autocratic nature of the principate, see, e.g., Starr (1954) 124–33.

⁶⁰ A particular problem for aristocratic self-image at this time was the frequent need to court members of the palace administration or abase themselves before imperial favourites who were almost invariably their social inferiors (cf., e.g., *Stat. Silv.* 3.3.85–171). The sense of outrage and humiliation at this inversion of the traditional social hierarchy is frequently expressed by writers of the period. As Hopkins (1983) 177–8 notes, 'there is something incongruous about the use of freed slaves, members of a legally repressed stratum, as chief administrators in a society that was ostensibly elitist and aristocratic'.

⁶¹ E.g., *mediocritatem pristinam neque dissimulavit unquam ac frequenter etiam prae se tulit* ('he never concealed his humble origins; indeed, he often drew attention to them', *Vesp.* 12.1). On this feature of his reign, see Charlesworth (1937) 54–62.

⁶² Hopkins (1983) 121 notes more generally that 'the traditional aristocracy was

tunities for individual aristocrats to win public acclaim: the defensive policies that often prevailed under the principate were seen by many members of the elite as reducing their prospects for military glory. Moreover, those generals who found themselves engaged in active combat fought under the name of the emperor—in practice, this meant that the triumph was available only to the *princeps* and his inner circle of favourites.⁶³

Elite and Amphitheatre

Having identified the aristocratic political perspective presupposed throughout the narrative, it is now time to return to the specific ideological significance of the poem's repeated deployment of the arena motif. As the foregoing analysis suggests, the Flavian *Argonautica* explores the crisis of self-image and self-fashioning within the Roman elite of Valerius' day, a crisis caused by a progressive erosion of its political power and status, along with diminishing opportunities for individual aristocrats to win public acclaim under the principate. In this poem it is possible to detect a reprocessing of social practices and ideological structures, now obsolete, which had formerly allowed the Roman elite not only to govern but, equally importantly, to assert and demonstrate its legitimacy and collective identity. In symbolically addressing this crisis, the *Argonautica* establishes the arena as a primary textual locus of aristocratic self-fashioning and self-assertion against the imperial value system. This is a particularly adept narrative strategy, in light of the increasing significance of the arena in contemporary cultural life. 'The arena [was] a social space within which all behaviour [was] symbolically significant, a locus in which social divisions and contestations [were] re-enacted.'⁶⁴ Valerius was not the first epicist to exploit amphitheatrical settings—this had

soon destroyed. . . . This process was aided by the emperors but had other causes. . . . The Roman senatorial order during the Principate never became entrenched in its defence of collective privilege.'

⁶³ On this topic, see further the discussion of Hopkins (1983) 156. As McGuire (1997) 103–13 notes, Valerius' poem likewise presents the opportunities for legitimate warfare are almost non-existent. In the *Argonautica* almost all war is presented as civil war—whether at Lemnos (2.107–310), Cyzicus (3.15–332) or Colchis (6.1–760).

⁶⁴ Gunderson (1996) 131.

already been done by Virgil, Lucan and others.⁶⁵ The difference in the *Argonautica* is the intense ideological investment that underwrites the artistic operation.⁶⁶ In effect, the amphitheatrical setting is appropriated in order symbolically to affirm the vitality of an enfeebled nobility through its carefully constructed narrative counterparts—namely, the Argonauts themselves.

In an important respect, the suitability of the amphitheatre for this narrative strategy arises from its prior status as an institution once sponsored and produced by the Roman elite, but now increasingly under the control—whether direct or indirect—of the emperor. The very act of producing a show had been a traditional obligation for the republican elite, as well as an important mark of distinction. In the empire, however, most gladiatorial shows, especially the very largest, were closely associated with the emperor and emperor worship. Moreover, Augustus had neutralised the potential for individual aristocrats to gain prestige through sponsorship by forbidding any one official from spending more than his colleagues on the production of games. This was an important act: under the republic, *munera* served not merely as manifestations of competition among the nobility but also as expressions of the balance of power between the elite collectively and the rest of the community.⁶⁷ The imposition by Augustus of a limit on noble expenditure thus constituted a transformation of the original republican principle, expressing the new reality that power was now concentrated in a single pair of hands.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ See, e.g., Hardie (1986) 152–4 (on Virgil) and note 64 (on Lucan).

⁶⁶ The amphitheatrical element was used for different purposes by Lucan, and Valerius' approach is characterised both by an altered perspective and a more nuanced deployment of the motif. On the amphitheatrical in Lucan, see Ahl (1976) 86–8 and Leigh (1997) *passim*—though the latter's stress on the 'sadistic disengagement of the amphitheatre' (p. 246) occasionally results in a somewhat monolithic view of this very complex institution. Cf. Leigh's observation ([1997] 243) that 'the metaliterary reference to the amphitheatrical has a consistently disrupting role [in Lucan]. On the one hand, it subverts conventions of epic pathos by reminding the reader of the emotions felt when attending the games. On the other hand, it undermines the category of the exemplary... by permitting or encouraging the reader to treat the episode just as a show.'

⁶⁷ Wiedemann (1992) 168.

⁶⁸ Hopkins (1983) 7 is surely mistaken in seeing this act as an attempt by Augustus 'to take all the games produced in the city of Rome out of the political sphere'. Rather, this constitutes a clear attempt to maximise the political benefits of the games to the emperor and to minimise their value to potential rivals; see Wiedemann (1992) 8. The fact that Augustus put forward this legislation under the guise of saving Roman aristocrats from incurring financial self-ruin should not be allowed to obscure its larger political impact.

Augustus' policy of aristocratic containment was gradually expanded by subsequent emperors; from Domitian's reign onwards, no gladiatorial games could be put on in Rome except by the emperor or by a relative or magistrate on his behalf.⁶⁹ For the non-imperial elite the result was the increasingly unavailability of the production of *munera* as a viable means of winning public acclaim.

In 80 CE the Amphitheatrum Flavium (or Colosseum), a permanent facility with a capacity of 50,000, was dedicated in Rome. In many respects, the construction of the Colosseum marked a point of no return for the elite, completing the transformation of gladiatorial shows into an imperial, as opposed to a broadly aristocratic, institution.⁷⁰ The popular addiction to the spectacles of the amphitheatre and circus in the imperial period is well known and does not need rehearsing here. By the Flavian period, the original function of gladiatorial shows had been transformed and the institution itself had taken on a new ideological significance as a centre of the emperor's popular cult.⁷¹ By a process of elimination, the arena became under the empire both a privileged meeting place of collective Roman life and the site of the central ritual of the Roman state. As Hopkins observes, this public spectacle constituted 'the only surviving assembly of citizens'.⁷² As such it provided for an important socio-political dynamic: for the emperor the games represented an opportunity to display his majesty; for the people the amphitheatre was their parliament.⁷³ Strikingly, in this cultural practice the aristocrat, displaced from his former position of *editor*, had been reduced to the status of imperial subject. His class merely comprised one more section—albeit a well-situated one—of the non-imperial citizenry.

Against this backdrop, an intriguing development of the early principate was the increasingly frequent appearance of Roman elite males

⁶⁹ Wiedemann (1992) 8.

⁷⁰ Titus' inaugural games, which lasted for one hundred days, underscored the fully imperial character of such *munera* ('public shows') by producing them on a scale of lavishness that was beyond the resources of all save the emperor himself.

⁷¹ Cf. Hopkins (1983) 5. Stambaugh (1988) 236 somewhat simplistically sees a transition of the gladiatorial shows from their original religious function into 'an undisguised form of entertainment'. But the arena continued to have a religious and especially a political significance. Cf. Gunderson (1996) 113–51, which characterises the arena under the emperors as an 'ideological state apparatus'. For the importance of not privileging the original character and function of the *munera* ('public shows') in analysing their role in imperial Rome, see Leigh (1997) 283.

⁷² Hopkins (1983) 19.

⁷³ Hopkins (1983) 16.

as contestants in amphitheatrical events. Given the socio-historical developments just described, this phenomenon can be seen as an attempt by some members of the aristocracy to reclaim a measure of prestige within a central cultural institution.⁷⁴ It was, to be sure, a highly controversial practice, which became the focus of a good deal of social critique and a considerable body of prohibitive legislation.⁷⁵ Such legislation, of course, suggests the very prevalence of the practices against which is directed—even the most obsessive legislator did not generally promote laws against non-existent activities. Arena participation thus constituted one strategy of adaptation for a Roman elite whose self-image had been formed by practices that were increasingly unavailable to them under the new conditions of the empire.

With the triumph no longer within the reach of the Roman aristocracy and military conquest largely a thing of the past, the arena became an increasingly important source for glory.⁷⁶ It provided an otherwise rare opportunity to demonstrate the cardinal Roman aristocratic quality of *uirtus* in a public setting.⁷⁷ Given the strong cultural emphasis on the evaluation and affirmation of important individuals by the larger community, the Roman elite needed constantly to display themselves in order to feel truly noble.⁷⁸ Hence, the appeal of the arena as a locus for the demonstration of aristocratic *uirtus* was unquestionably increasing in the imperial period.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ A point well argued in Gunderson (1996) 136–42.

⁷⁵ The prohibitive legislation originated variously with disapproving aristocrats and the emperor himself. In practice, such legal measures seem to have been ignored and evaded. For example, Cassius Dio (56.25.7–8) reports that in 11 cē Augustus allowed some equestrians to fight because attempts to stop them would have been futile. Cf. Suet. *Aug.* 43; Tac. *Hist.* 2.62.4; Cass. Dio 43.25.5, 64.6.3.

⁷⁶ For the arena as a substitute for the battlefield, cf. Man. 4.225–6 and Wiedemman (1992) 109.

⁷⁷ Cf. Stambaugh (1988) 236: 'With its imposing bulk, and with its exclusive preoccupation to aggression, the brandishing of spears and swords, and brute physical courage, it invited a description in Freudian terms, as an image of the Roman preoccupation with the display of virility'. From this perspective, the centrality of the notion of the amphitheatre as a place for the demonstration of *uirtus* is shown by Suetonius' criticism of the emperor Claudius for his excessive interest in the slaughter (*Claud.* 14, 34).

⁷⁸ On this topic see, e.g., Riggsby (1998) 75–97.

⁷⁹ The emperors were not entirely exempt from the lure of arena participation. Nero and Domitian both dabbled in gladiatorial contests, as did Hadrian in his youth. Commodus trained as a gladiator (killing or maiming numerous training partners in the process) and actually performed in the arena with blunted weapons,

As Gunderson has suggested, 'there [was] a structural enticement for the *nobilis* to be seen as a gladiator enacting the manly, military aspects of his privileged status before the crowd. In other words, the relative positions of *nobilis* and gladiator were sufficiently alike within their own homologous spaces to allow the former a partial identification with the figure of the latter.'⁸⁰ In the imperial period, gladiators became glamour figures and even culture heroes.⁸¹ Hence 'the intact nobility not only did not necessarily see a conflict between performing in the arena and maintaining their status, but they appear to have viewed the fights as a means to augment their prestige'.⁸²

The arena thus became a means by which the elite Roman male's cultural obsession with fighting, ostentation and competition might be satisfied.⁸³ It held obvious attractions for a social class that was struggling to adapt its production of identity and sense of self-worth in the new, more restricted conditions afforded under the principate.⁸⁴ Indeed, the arena allowed a re-enactment of the aristocratic *virtus* upon which (according to the privileged perspective of Roman epic) the empire was built. In the combat of noble gladiators, of course, no one was supposed to die, even if there was inevitably

reportedly winning all his fights (Cass. Dio 72.19–22). For a full list of emperors who either practised as gladiators or fought in gladiatorial contests, see Hopkins (1983) 20.

⁸⁰ Gunderson (1996) 137; likewise Gunderson (1996) 145, where it is suggested that the gladiator is 'an encoded version of the Roman noble male'.

⁸¹ A good discussion in Hopkins (1983) 21.

⁸² Gunderson (1996) 142.

⁸³ Hopkins (1983) 20. Gunderson (1996) 140 observes that already in Livy (28.21) we find 'an Augustan-era model for the noble gladiator that is charged with positive associations and accommodating to fighters from the higher orders of society'. He notes further Ulpian's stipulation (*Dig.* 3.1.1.6) that the excuse of prowess in arms could be used by the noble gladiator to avoid *infamia* so long as he did not accept pay.

⁸⁴ It is significant that a great many Roman nobles trained as gladiators even if they never fought in public (see Gunderson [1996] 141). Hence a certain element of fantasy must have been present in the association of aristocracy and gladiatorial combat and this will have readily lent itself to reappropriation in Valerius' text. The element of fantasy was, indeed, an essential ingredient given the profoundly contradictory circumstances of the Roman elite in the Flavian period. Compare the observation of Jameson (1988) 134–5 that when no viable political option is available for a given social group, a narrative fantasy is often produced, resulting in a kind of ideological wish-fulfilment that temporarily suspends the contradictions inherent in the circumstances of that group. In the case of the *Argonautica*, the fantasy is attached to a cultural institution that was itself the locus of collective fantasy, namely, the arena.

some risk involved.⁸⁵ In these contests the skill demonstrated by the combatants was a primary feature of the encounter and such aristocratic performances were invariably popular with Roman audiences.⁸⁶

The Flavian *Argonautica*, then, in repeatedly casting heroic action within an amphitheatrical setting, registers an important process of transformation for a class whose self-image had been formed by practices that were increasingly unavailable to them. As suggested above, the amphitheatrical space provides an ideological core around which much of Valerius' epic is constructed. The schematised arena serves as a symbolic locus of contestation in which the *nobilitas* and *uirtus* of the aristocrat can be asserted and the imperial value system confronted.

Considered in this light, a notable feature of the Bebrycia episode is its emphasis on the elevated *uirtus* of Amycus' opponents. Valerius states explicitly that the Bebrycian king does not deign to challenge those visitors he deems of inferior stature and courage (*aequae uirtutis egentes*, V. Fl. 4.151); instead he brutally offers the latter as sacrificial victims in barbaric rites to his father Neptune. These actions, though unspeakably savage in themselves, imply a principle of status differentiation in the selection process: the equation of worthy opponents with nobility is underscored by the earlier identification of Amycus' challengers as *reges* ('heroes', 4.130).⁸⁷ Thus Amycus makes *nobilitas* a primary evaluative criterion in selecting 'performers' for his spectacle. The Bebrycian king's insistence upon the worthiness of his opponents replicates one of the fundamental rules of amphitheatrical combat—namely that competitors should only fight against their social equals. In other words, Pollux' participation in the 'show' is predicated on his social standing, his *nobilitas*. The stress on both

⁸⁵ Cf. Cass. Dio 57.14.3, where the death of an equestrian in the arena in 15 CE is recounted. According to Cassius Dio, Tiberius reacted by imposing upon the victor a life-time ban from gladiatorial performance.

⁸⁶ Gunderson (1996, 141) notes that the existence of such conventions for aristocratic combatants 'depended on a skill ethic taking precedence over simple blood lust', citing Suet. *Calig.* 30 along with the mention at Cass. Dio 72.29.3 of a gladiatorial event during the reign of Marcus Aurelius in which blunted weapons were used exclusively so that injury was avoided and the focus of the event was on skill alone. The emphasis on skill is, of course, also a strong element in Valerius' Bebrycian boxing narrative, as discussed above.

⁸⁷ In Valerius the term *rex* generally does not mean 'ruler', but something more like 'aristocratic hero'; cf. *Argonautica* 1.342, where Aeson refers to the Argonauts collectively as *reges*, along with the reference to Medea as *regina* ('queen') at 6.657 (and see Fucecchi [1997] 217 *ad* 6.657).

the high social standing and *uirtus* is thus a crucial class marker for the episode and can be seen to reinforce traditional hierarchical forms of social identity at a time when these very hierarchies were being eroded and reconfigured. Moreover, by emphasising the fundamental combination of aristocracy and courage in Amycus' conqueror, the episode makes itself available to the contemporary Roman elite male for identification.⁸⁸ In this respect, the Flavian epic promotes a specific ideological position by its insistence on aristocrat performance and its positive characterisation of such performances as valorous and voluntary undertakings.⁸⁹ Finally, as already noted, the Bebrycia episode produces on both the narrative and allegorical levels a fundamental staging of the triumph of a larger human destiny. In effect, Pollux' victory over Amycus enacts a crucial movement of history and grounds that movement within the actions of an individual aristocratic subject. It thus reaffirms the epic view of history that ascribes a central role to a heroic aristocracy. At the same time, by situating Pollux' exploit in an amphitheatrical setting, the narrative uses it to valorise, by association, the noble arena participant of Valerius' own day.

Conclusion

What is at play in Valerius' text, then, are certain strategies of legitimisation for a controversial social practice that reinscribed the Roman aristocratic male within a central collective ritual of the empire and at the same time placed him before the admiring gaze of the populace. The poem explores on a symbolic level the question of whether

⁸⁸ The same stress on the nobility of the 'performers' in the Colchian civil war is found in Juno's question to Medea: *tales quando tibi cernere reges?* ('When will you again have the opportunity to see such noblemen?', V. Fl. 6.487).

⁸⁹ In all the scenes of aristocratic spectacle in the epic there is an emphasis on the voluntary nature of the performance. In *Argonautica* 4, for example, Valerius deviates from Apollonius in not having Amycus confront the Argonauts the moment they land in Bebrycia (cf. Ap. Rhod. 2.8–17). As a result, the heroes are presented with the possibility of avoiding a combat with the monstrous tyrant, an option that they pointedly decline (V. Fl. 4.139–76). Likewise, a notable feature of the spectacle of Jason's trials in Colchis is the description of Aeetes fervently hoping that Jason will choose *not* to perform (7.539–42)—a point not addressed by Taylor (1996) 229 in arguing that the labours imposed by the tyrant in *Argonautica* 7 are meant to recall Nero's actions in forcing elite Romans to fight in the amphitheatre.

the arena could continue to serve in the imperial period as an institution that sustained Roman elite identity. Its repeated use of the arena motif grounds the practices of the contemporary aristocrat in a heroic past by rewriting that mythic past in terms of present-day cultural practices. In short, the Flavian *Argonautica* effects a partial reinscription of the aristocratic form of the epic, complete with its ideology of heroism and destiny, within the context of the arena.

Valerius' poem, in other words, does not simply provide a literary reflection of an attempted process of cultural adaptation, but rather participates in and offers an ideologically charged perspective on that process. Through a figurative merging of contemporary elite performances in the arena with the mythical deeds of Argonautic heroes, the former are symbolically reconfigured by the epic as culturally significant acts, which manifest the *nobilitas* of the performer and augment the prestige of the larger social group to which he belongs. In this way, the poem valorises on a symbolic level the contemporary trend of aristocratic participation in the arena and thereby asserts during an era of diminishing opportunities for public distinction the continuing significance and heroism of the elite Roman male.

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